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EDITED BY
LORD GORELL

FIRST EDITOR
W. M. THACKERAY

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THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY 1939.

CURIOUS ADVENTURE OF MR. BOND.

BY NUGENT BARKER.

MR. BOND climbed from the wooded slopes of the valley into broad moonlight. His Inverness cape, throwing his portly figure into still greater prominence against the floor of tree-tops at his back, was torn and soiled by twigs and thorns and leaves, and he stooped with prim concern to brush off the bits and pieces. After this, he eased his knapsack on his shoulder ; and now he blinked his eyes upon the country stretching out before him. Far away, across the tufted surface of the tableland, there stood a house, with its column of smoke, lighted and still, on the verge of a forest.

A house—an *inn*—he felt it in his very bones ! His hunger returned, and became a source of gratification to him. Toiling on, and pulling the brim of his hat over his eyes, he watched the ruby gleam grow bigger and brighter ; and when at last he stood beneath the sign, he cried aloud, scarcely able to believe in his good fortune.

'The *Rest of the Traveller*,' he read ; and there, too, ran the name of the landlord : 'Crispin Sasserach.'

The stillness of the night discouraged him, and he was afraid to tap at the curtained window. And now, for the first time, the full weight of his weariness fell upon the traveller. Staring into the black mouth of the porch, he imagined himself to be at rest, in bed, sprawled out, abundantly sleeping, drugged into forgetfulness by a full stomach. He shut his eyes, and drooped a little under his Inverness cape ; but when he looked again into the entrance, there

stood Crispin Sasserach, holding a lamp between their faces. Mr. Bond's was plump and heavy-jawed, with sagging cheeks, and eyes that scarcely reflected the lamp-light; the other face was smooth and large and oval, with small lips pressed into a smile.

'Come in, come in,' the landlord whispered, '*do* come in. She is cooking a *lovely* broth to-night!'

He turned and chuckled, holding the lamp above his head.

Through the doorway of this lost, upland inn, Mr. Bond followed the monstrous back of his host. The passage widened and became a hall; and here, amongst the shadows that were gliding from their lurking-places as the lamp advanced, the landlord stopped, and tilted the flat of his hand in the air, as though enjoining his guest to listen. Then Mr. Bond disturbed the silence of the house with a sniff and a sigh. Not only could he smell the '*lovely* broth'—already, in this outer hall, he tasted it . . . a complex and subtle flavour, pungent, heavy as honey, light as a web in the air, nipping him in the stomach, bringing tears into his eyes.

Mr. Bond stared at Crispin Sasserach, at the shadows beyond, and back again to Crispin Sasserach. The man was standing there with his huge, oval, hairless face upturned in the light of the lamp he carried; then, impulsively, and as though reluctant to cut short such sweet anticipation, he plucked the traveller by the cape, and led him to the cheerful living-room, and introduced him, with a flourish of the hand, to Myrtle Sasserach, the landlord's young and small and busy wife, who at that very moment was standing at a round table of great size, beneath the massive centre-beam of the ceiling, her black hair gleaming in the light of many candles, her plump hand dipping a ladle soundlessly into a bowl of steam.

On seeing the woman, whose long lashes were once more directed towards the bowl, Mr. Bond drew his chin primly into his neckcloth, and glanced from her to Crispin Sasserach, and finally he fixed his eyes on the revolutions of the ladle. In a moment, purpose fell upon the living-room, and with swift and nervous gestures the landlord seated his guest at the table, seized the ladle from his wife, plunged it into the bowl, and thrust the brimming plate into the hands of Myrtle, who began at once to walk towards the traveller, the steam of the broth rising into her grave eyes.

After a muttered grace, Mr. Bond pushed out his lips as though he were whispering 'spoon.'

'Oh, what a lovely broth!' he murmured, catching a drip in his handkerchief.

Crispin Sasserach grinned with delight. 'I always say it's the best in the world.' Whereupon, with a rush, he broke into peals of falsetto laughter, and blew a kiss towards his wife. A moment later, the two Sasserachs were leaving their guest to himself, bending over their own platefuls of broth, and discussing domestic affairs, as though they had no other person sitting at their table. For some time their voices were scarcely louder than the sound of the broth-eating; but when the traveller's plate was empty, then, in a flash, Crispin Sasserach became again a loud and attentive host. 'Now then, sir—another helping?' he suggested, picking up the ladle, and beaming down into the bowl, while Myrtle left her chair and walked a second time towards the guest.

Mr. Bond said that he would, and pulled his chair a little closer to the table. Into his blood and bones, life had returned with twice its accustomed vigour; his very feet were as light as though he had soaked them in a bath of pine needles.

'There you are, sir ! Myrtle's coming ! Lord a'mighty, how I wish I was tasting it for the first time !' Then, spreading his elbows, the landlord crouched over his own steaming plateful, and chuckled again. 'This broth is a wine in itself ! It's a wine in itself, b'God ! It staggers a man !' Flushed with excitement, his oval face looked larger than ever, and his auburn hair, whirled into bellicose corkscrews, seemed to burn brighter, as though someone had brought the bellows to it.

Stirred by the broth, Mr. Bond began to describe minutely his journey out of the valley. His voice grew as prosy, his words as involved, as though he were talking at home amongst his own people. 'Now, let me see—where was I ?' he buzzed again and again. And later : 'I was very glad to see your light, I can tell you !' he chuckled. Then Crispin jumped up from the table, his small mouth pouting with laughter.

The evening shifted to the fireside. Fresh logs cracked like pistol shots as Crispin Sasserach dropped them into the flames. The traveller could wish for nothing better than to sit here by the hearth, talking plangently to Crispin, and slyly watching Myrtle as she cleared away the supper things ; though, indeed, amongst his own people, Mr. Bond was thought to hold women in low esteem. He found her downcast eyes modest and even pretty. One by one she blew the candles out ; with each extinguishment she grew more ethereal, while reaping a fuller share of the pagan firelight. 'Come and sit beside us now, and talk,' thought Mr. Bond, and presently she came.

They made him very comfortable. He found a log fire burning in his bedroom, and a bowl of broth on the bedside table. 'Oh, but they're overdoing it !' he cried aloud, petulantly ; 'they're crude, crude ! They're nothing but

school-children !'—and, seizing the bowl, he emptied it onto the shaggy patch of garden beneath his window. The black wall of the forest seemed to stand within a few feet of his eyes. The room was filled with the mingled light of moon, fire, and candle.

Mr. Bond, eager at last for the dreamless rest, the abandoned sleep, of the traveller, turned and surveyed the room in which he was to spend the night. He saw with pleasure the four-poster bed, itself as large as a tiny room ; the heavy oaken chairs and cupboards ; the tall, twisting candlesticks, their candles burnt half-way, no doubt, by a previous guest ; the ceiling, that he could touch with the flat of his hand. He touched it.

In the misty morning he could see no hint of the forest, and down the shallow staircase he found the hall thick with the odour of broth. The Sasserachs were seated already at the breakfast-table, like two children, eager to begin the day with their favourite food. Crispin Sasserach was lifting his spoon and pouting his lips, while Myrtle was stirring her ladle round the tureen, her eyes downcast ; and Mr. Bond sighed inaudibly as he saw again the woman's dark and lustrous hair. He noticed also the flawless condition of the Sasserach skin. There was not a blemish to be seen on their two faces, on their four hands. He attributed this perfection to the beneficial qualities of the broth, no less than to the upland air ; and he began to discuss, in his plangent voice, the subject of health in general. In the middle of this discourse Crispin Sasserach remarked, excitedly, that he had a brother who kept an inn a day's journey along the edge of the forest.

'Oh,' said Mr. Bond, pricking up his ears, 'so you have a brother, have you ?'

'Certainly,' whispered the innkeeper. 'It is most convenient.'

'Most convenient for what?'

'Why, for the inns. His name's Martin. We share our guests. We help each other. The proper brotherly spirit, b'God!'

Mr. Bond stared angrily into his broth. 'They share their guests. . . . But what,' he thought, 'has that to do with me?' He said aloud: 'Perhaps I'll meet him one day, Mr. Sasserach.'

'To-day!' cried Crispin, whacking his spoon onto the table. 'I'm taking you there to-day! But don't you worry,' he added, seeing the look on the other's face, and flattering himself that he had read it aright; 'you'll be coming back to us! Don't you worry! Day after tomorrow—day after that—one of these days! Ain't that right, Myr? Ain't that right?' he repeated, bouncing up and down in his chair like a big child.

'Quite right,' answered Myrtle Sasserach to Mr. Bond, whose eyes were fixed upon her with heavy attention.

A moment later the innkeeper was out of his chair, making for the hall, calling back to Myrtle to have his boots ready. In the midst of this bustle, Mr Bond bowed stiffly to Myrtle Sasserach, and found his way with dignity to the back garden, that now appeared wilder than he had supposed—a fenced-in plot of grass reaching above his knees and scattered with burdock whose prickly heads clung to his clothes as he made for the gate in the fence at the foot of this wilderness. He blinked his eyes, and walked on the rough turf that lay between him and the forest. By this time the sun was shining in an unclouded sky; a fine day was at hand; and Mr. Bond was sweeping his eye along the endless wall of the forest when he heard

the innkeeper's voice calling to him in the stillness. 'Mr. Bond ! Mr. Bond !' Turning reluctantly, and stepping carefully through the garden in order to avoid the burrs of the burdock, the traveller found Crispin Sasserach on the point of departure, in a great bustle, with a strong horse harnessed to a two-wheeled cart, and his wife putting up her face to be kissed.

'Yes, I'll go with you,' cried Mr. Bond, but the Sasserachs did not appear to hear him. He lingered for a moment in the porch, scowling at Myrtle's back, scowling at the large young horse that seemed to toss its head at him with almost human insolence ; then he sighed, and, slinging his knapsack over his shoulder, sat himself beside the driver ; the horse was uncommonly large, restless between the shafts, and in perfect fettle ; and without a word from Crispin the animal began to plunge forward rapidly over the worn track.

For some time the two men drove in silence, on the second stage of Mr. Bond's adventure above the valley. The traveller sat up stiffly, inflating his lungs methodically, glaring through his small eyes, and forcing back his shoulders. Presently he began to talk about the mountain air, and received no answer. On his right hand the wall of the forest extended as far as his eyes could see ; while on his left hand ran the brink of the valley, a mile away, broken here and there by rowan trees.

The monotony of the landscape, and the continued silence of the innkeeper, soon began to pall on Mr. Bond, who liked talking and was seldom at ease unless his eyes were busy picking out new things. Even the horse behaved with the soundless regularity of a machine ; so that, besides the traveller, only the sky showed a struggle to make progress.

Clouds came from nowhere, shaped and broke, and at midday the sun in full swing was riding between white puffs of cloud, glistening by fits and starts on the moist coat of the horse. The forest beneath, and the stretch of coarse grass running to the valley, were constantly shining and darkening, yet Crispin Sasserach never opened his mouth, even to whisper, though sometimes, between his teeth, he spat soundlessly over the edge of the cart. The landlord had brought with him a casserole of the broth ; and during one of these sunny breaks he pulled up the horse, without a word, and poured the liquor into two pannikins, which he proceeded to heat patiently over a spirit-stove.

In the failing light of the afternoon, when the horse was still making his top speed, when Crispin Sasserach was buzzing fitfully between his teeth, and sleep was flirting with the traveller, a shape appeared obscurely on the track ahead, and with it came the growing jingle of bells. Mr. Bond sat up and stared. He had not expected to meet, in such a God-forsaken spot, another cart, or carriage. He saw at length, approaching him, a four-wheeled buggy, drawn by two sprightly horses in tandem. A thin-faced man in breeches and a bowler hat was driving it. The two drivers greeted each other solemnly, raised their whips, but never slackened speed.

‘ Well—who was that ? ’ asked Mr. Bond, after a pause.

‘ My brother Martin’s manservant. ’

‘ Where is he going ? ’ asked Mr. Bond.

‘ To “The Rest of the Traveller.” With news. ’

‘ Indeed ? What news ? ’ persisted Mr. Bond.

The landlord turned his head.

‘ News for my Myrtle, ’ he whispered, winking at the traveller.

Mr. Bond shrugged his shoulders. ‘ What is the use of

talking to such a boor ?' he thought, and fell once more into his doze ; the harvest-moon climbed up again, whitening the earth ; while now and then the landlord spat towards the forest, and never spoke another word until he came to Martin Sasserach's.

Then Crispin leapt to life.

' Out with you !' he cried. ' Pst ! Mr. Bond ! Wake up ! Get out at once ! We've reached "The Headless Man," sir !'

Mr. Bond, staggered by so much energy, flopped to the ground. His head felt as large as the moon. He heard the horse panting softly, and saw the breath from its nostrils flickering upwards in the cold air. And as though this acre of the world had become a circus-ring, there was the white-faced Crispin Sasserach leaping about under the moon ; the figure was whistling between its teeth, and calling out enthusiastically : ' Mar-tin ! Mar-tin ! Here he is !'

The sheer wall of forest echoed back the name. Indeed, the whole of the moonlight seemed to be filled with the name ' Martin ' ; and Mr. Bond had a fierce desire to see this Martin Sasserach whose sign was hanging high above the traveller's head. After repeated calls from Crispin, the landlord of 'The Headless Man' appeared, and Mr. Bond, expecting a very giant in physical stature, was shocked to see the small and bespectacled figure that had emerged at leisure from the house. Crispin Sasserach grew quick and calm in a moment. ' Meet again,' he whispered to Mr. Bond, shutting his eyes, and stretching his small mouth as as though in ecstasy ; then he gave the traveller a push towards the approaching Martin, and a moment later he was in his cart, and the horse was springing its way back to 'The Rest of the Traveller.'

Mr. Bond stood where he was, listening to the dying

sound of the horse, and watching the landlord of 'The Headless Man'; and presently he was staring at two grey flickering eyes behind the landlord's glasses.

'Anyone arriving at my inn from my brother's is trebly welcome. He is welcome not only for Crispin's own sake and mine, but also for the sake of our brother Stephen.' The voice was as quiet and as clear and as brittle as the moon-light, and the speaker began to return to his inn with scarcely a pause between speech and movement. Mr. Bond examined curiously the strongly-lighted hall that in shape and size was the very double of Crispin's. Oil-lamps, gracefully columned, gleamed almost as brightly from their fluted silver surfaces as from their opal-lighted heads; and there was Martin stooping up the very stairs, it seemed, that Mr. Bond had walked at Crispin Sasserach's—a scanty man, this brother, throwing out monstrous shadows, turning once to peer back at his guest, and standing at last in a bright and airy bedroom, where, with courteous words from which his eyes, lost in thought and gently flickering, seemed to be far distant, he invited his guest to wash before dining.

Martin Sasserach fed Mr. Bond delicately on that evening of his arrival, presenting him with small, cold dishes of various kinds and always exquisitely cooked and garnished; and these, together with the almost crystalline cleanliness of the room and of the table, seemed appropriate to the chemist-like appearance of the host. A bottle of wine was opened for Mr. Bond, who, amongst his own people, was known to drink nothing headier than bottled cider. During dinner, the wine warmed up a brief moment of attention in Martin Sasserach. He peered with sudden interest at his guest. "'The Headless Man?'" There is, in fact, a story connected with that name. If you can call it a story.' He smiled briefly, tapping his finger, and a moment later

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was examining an ivory piece, elaborately carved, that held the bill of fare. 'Lovely! Lovely! Isn't it? . . . In fact, there are many stories,' he ended, as though the number of stories excused him from wasting his thought over the recital of merely one. Soon after dinner he retired, alluding distantly to work from which he never liked to be away long.

Mr. Bond went to bed early that night, suffering from dyspepsia, and glowering at the absence of home comforts in his bright and efficient bedroom.

The birds awakened him to a brisk, autumnal morning. Breathing heavily, he told himself that he was always very fond of birds and trees and flowers; and soon he was walking sleepily in Martin Sasserach's garden. The trimness of the beds began to please him. He followed the right-angled paths with dignified obesity, his very bones were proud to be alive. A green gate at the garden-foot attracted Mr. Bond's attention; but, knowing that it would lead him on to the wild grass beyond, and thence to the forest, whose motionless crest could be seen all this while over the privet hedge, he chose to linger where he was, sniffing the clear scent of the flowers, and losing, with every breath and step, another whiff of Crispin's broth, to his intense delight.

Hunger drew him back into the house at last, and he began to pace the twilit rooms. Martin Sasserach, he saw, was very fond of ivory. He stooped and peered at the delicate things. Ivory objects of every description, perfectly carved: paper-knives, chess-men, salad-spoons; tiny busts and faces, often of grotesque appearance; and even delicate boxes, fretted from ivory.

The echo of his feet on the polished floors intensified the silence of 'The Headless Man'; yet even this indoor hush

was full of sound, when compared with the stillness of the scene beyond the uncurtained windows. The tufted grass was not yet lighted by the direct rays of the sun. The traveller stared towards the rowan trees that stood on the brink of the valley. Beyond them stretched a carpet of mist, raising the rest of the world to the height of the plateau ; and Mr. Bond, recalling the house and town that he had left behind him, began to wonder whether he was glad or sorry that his adventures had brought him to this lost region. 'Cold enough for my cape,' he shivered, fetching it from the hall, and hurrying out of the inn ; the desire had seized him to walk on the tufted grass, to foot it as far as the trees ; and he had indeed gone some distance on his journey, wrapped in his thoughts and antique Inverness cape, when the note of a gong came up behind him, like a thread waving on the air.

'Hark at that,' he whispered, staring hard at the ragged line of rowan trees on which his heart was set ; then he shrugged his shoulders, and turned back to 'The Headless Man,' where his host was standing lost in thought at the breakfast-table that still held the crumbs of the night before.

'Ah, yes. Yes. It's you . . . You slept well ?'

'Tolerably well,' said Mr. Bond.

'We breakfast rather early here. It makes a longer day. Stennet will be back later. He's gone to my brother Crispin's.'

'With news ?' said Mr. Bond.

Martin Sasserach bowed courteously, though a trifle stiffly. He motioned his guest towards a chair at the table. Breakfast was cold and short and silent. Words were delicate things to rear in this crystalline atmosphere. Martin's skin sagged and was the colour of old ivory. Now and then he looked up at his guest, his grey eyes focussed beyond

mere externals ; and it seemed as though they lodged themselves in Mr. Bond's very bones. On one of these occasions the traveller made great play with his appetite. 'It's all this upland air,' he asserted, thumping his chest.

The sun began to rise above the plateau. Again the landlord vanished, murmuring his excuses ; silence flooded 'The Headless Man,' the garden purred in the full blaze of the sun that now stood higher than the forest, and the gravelled paths crunched slowly beneath Mr. Bond's feet. 'News for Myrtle,' he pondered, letting his thoughts stray back over his journey ; and frequently he drifted through the house where all was still and spacious : dusty, museum-like rooms brimming with sunlight, while everywhere those ivory carvings caught his eye, possessing his sight as completely as the taste of Crispin's broth had lodged in his very lungs.

Lunch was yet another meal of cold food and silence, broken only by coffee that the landlord heated on a spirit stove at the end of the table, and by a question from the traveller, to which this thin-haired Martin, delicately flicking certain greyish dust off the front of his coat and sleeve, replied that he had been a collector of carvings for years past, and was continually adding to his collection. His voice drew out in length and seemed, in fact, to trail him from the sunlit dining-room, back to his everlasting work . . . and now the afternoon itself began to drag and presently to settle down in the sun as though the whole of time were dozing.

'Here's my indigestion back again,' sighed Mr. Bond, mooning about. At home he would have rested in his bedroom, with its pink curtains and flowered wallpaper.

He crept into the garden, and eyed the back of the house. Which of those windows in the trimly-creeped stone lit

up the landlord and his work ? He listened for the whirring of a lathe, the scraping of a knife . . . and wondered, startled, why he had expected to hear such things. He felt the forest behind his back, and turned, and saw it looming above the privet hedge. Impulsively, he started to cross the sun-swept grass beyond the gate : but within a few yards of the forest his courage failed him again : he could not face the wall of trees : and with a cry he fled into the house, and seized his Inverness.

His eyes looked far beyond the rowans on the skyline as he plodded over the tufted grass. Already he could see himself down there below, counties and counties away, on the valley level, in the house of his neighbours the Allcards, drinking their coffee or tea and telling them of his adventures and especially of *this* adventure. It was not often that a man of his age and secure position in the world went off alone, in search of joy or trouble. He scanned the distant line of rowan trees, and nodded, harking back : ' As far as it has gone. I'll tell them this adventure, as far as it ever went.' And he would say to them : ' The things I might have seen, if I had stayed ! Yes, Allcard, I was very glad to climb down into the valley that day, I can tell you ! I don't mind admitting I was a bit frightened ! '

The tippet of his cape caressed his shoulders, like the hand of a friend.

Mr. Bond was not yet half-way to the rowan trees when, looking back, he saw, against the darkness of the forest wall, a carriage rapidly approaching ' The Headless Man.' At once there flashed into his memory the eyes of the manservant Stennet who went between the Sasserach inns.

He knew that Stennet's eyes were on him now. The sound of the horses' feet was coming up to him like a soft ball bouncing over the grass. Mr. Bond shrugged his

shoulders, and stroked his pendulous cheeks. Already he was on his way back to 'The Headless Man,' conscious that two flying horses could have overtaken him long before he had reached the rowans. 'But why,' he thought, holding himself with dignity, 'should I imagine that these people are expecting me to run away? And why that sudden panic in the garden? It's all that deathly quietness of the morning getting on my nerves.'

The carriage had disappeared some time before he reached the inn, over whose tiled and weather-stained roof the redness of the evening was beginning to settle. And now the traveller was conscious of a welcome that seemed to run out and meet him at the very door. He found a log fire crackling in the dining-room; and Mr. Bond, holding his hands to the blaze, felt suddenly at ease, and weary. He had intended to assert himself—to shout for Martin Sasserach—to demand that he be escorted down at once from the plateau . . . but now he wished for nothing better than to stand in front of the fire, waiting for Stennet to bring him tea.

A man began to sing in the heart of the house. Stennet? The fellow's eyes and hawk-like nose were suddenly visible in the fire. The singing voice grew louder . . . died at length discreetly into silence and the tread of footsteps in the hall . . . and again the traveller was listening to the flames as they roared in the chimney.

'Let me take your coat, sir,' Stennet said.

Then Mr. Bond whipped round, his cheeks shaking with anger.

Why did they want to force this hospitality upon him, making him feel like a prisoner? He glared at the large-checked riding-breeches, at the muscular shoulders, at the face that seemed to have grown the sharper through

swift driving. He almost shouted : 'Where's that bowler hat ?'

Fear ? . . . Perhaps . . . But if fear had clutched him for a moment, it had left him now. He knew that the voice had pleased him, a voice of deference breaking into the cold and irreverent silence of 'The Headless Man.' The cape was already off his shoulders, hanging on Stennet's bent and respectful arm. And—God be praised !—the voice was announcing that tea would be ready soon. Mr. Bond's spirits leapt with the word. He and Stennet stood there, confidentially plotting. 'China ? Yes, sir. We have China,' Stennet said.

'And buttered toast,' said Mr. Bond, softly rubbing his chin. Some time after tea he was awakened from his doze by the hand of the manservant, who told him that a can of boiling water was waiting in his room.

Mr. Bond felt that dinner would be a rich meal that night, and it was. He blushed as the dishes were put before him. Hare soup ! How did they know his favourite soup ? Through entrée, remove, and roast, his hands, soft and pink from washing, were busier than they had been for days. The chicken was braised to a turn. Oh, what mushrooms *au gratin* ! The partridge brought tears to his eyes. The Saxony pudding caused him to turn again to Martin, in Stennet's praise.

The landlord bowed with distant courtesy. 'A game of chess ?' he suggested, when dinner was over. 'My last opponent was a man like yourself, a traveller making a tour of the inns. We started a game. He is gone from us now. Perhaps you will take his place ?' smiled Martin Sasserach, his precise voice dropping and seeming to transmit its flow of action to the thin hand poised above the board. 'My move,' he whispered, playing at once ; he had thought

it out for a week. But although Mr. Bond tried to sink his thoughts into the problem so suddenly placed before him, he could not take them off his after-dinner dyspepsia, and with apologies and groans he scraped back his chair. 'I'm sorry for that,' smiled Martin, and his eyes flickered over the board. 'I'm very sorry. Another night . . . undoubtedly . . . with your kind help . . . another night. . . .'

The prospect of another day at 'The Headless Man' was at once disturbing and pleasant to Mr. Bond as he went wheezing up to bed.

'Ah, Stennet! Do *you* ever suffer from dyspepsia?' he asked mournfully, seeing the man at the head of the staircase. Stennet snapped his fingers, and was off downstairs in a moment; and a minute later he was standing at the traveller's door, with a bowl of Crispin's famous broth. 'Oh, that!' cried Mr. Bond, staring down at the bowl. Then he remembered its fine effect on his indigestion at Crispin's; and when at last he pulled the sheets over his head, he fell asleep in comfort and did not wake until the morning.

At breakfast Martin Sasserach looked up from his plate.

'This afternoon,' he murmured, 'Stennet will be driving you to my brother Stephen's.'

Mr. Bond opened his eyes. 'Another inn? Another of you Sasserachs?'

'Crispin—Martin—Stephen. Just the three of us. A perfect number . . . if you come to think of it.'

The traveller strode into the garden. Asters glowed in the lustreless light of the morning. By ten o'clock the sun was shining again, and by midday a summer heat lay on the plateau, penetrating even into Mr. Bond's room. The silence of the forest pulled him to the window, made him lift up

his head and shut his eyes upon that monstrous mass of trees. Fear was trying to overpower him. He did not want to go to Stephen Sasserach's; but the hours were running past him quickly now, the old stagnation was gone from the inn.

At lunch, to which his host contributed a flow of gentle talk, the traveller felt rising within him an impatience to be off on the third stage of his journey, if such a stage must be. He jumped up from his chair without apology, and strode into the garden. The asters were now shining dimly in the strong sunlight. He opened the gate in the privet hedge, and walked on to the tufted grass that lay between it and the forest. As he did so, he heard the flap of a wing behind him, and saw a pigeon flying from a window in the roof. The bird flew over his head and over the forest and out of sight; and his thoughts were still following the pigeon over the boundless floor of tree-tops when he heard a voice calling to him in the silence. 'Mr. Bond! Mr. Bond!' He walked at once to the gate and down the garden and into the house, put on his Inverness, and hitched his knapsack on to his shoulder; and in a short while he was perched beside Stennet in the flying buggy, staring at the ears of the two horses, and remembering that Martin, at the last moment, instead of bidding his guest good-bye, had gone back to his work.

Though he never lost his fear of Stennet, Mr. Bond found Martin's man a good companion on a journey, always ready to speak when spoken to, and even able to arouse the traveller's curiosity, at times, in the monotonous landscape.

'See those rowans over there?' said Stennet, nodding to the left. 'Those rowans belong to Mr. Martin. He owns

them half-way back to Mr. Crispin's place, and half-way on to Mr. Stephen's. And so it is with Mr. Crispin and Mr. Stephen in their turn.'

'And what about the forest?'

'Same again,' said Stennet, waving his hand towards the right. 'It's round, you know. And they each own a third, like a huge slice of cake.'

He clicked his tongue, and the horses pricked up their ears, though on either side of the dash-board the performance was no more than a formality, so swiftly was the buggy moving. 'Very much quicker than Crispin's cart!' gasped the passenger, feeling the wind against his face; yet, when the evening of the autumn day was closing in, he looked about him with surprise.

He saw the moon rise up above the valley.

Later still, he asked for information regarding the names of the three inns, and Stennet laughed.

'The gentlemen are mighty proud of them, I can tell you! Romantic and a bit fearsome, that's what I call them. Poetical, too. They don't say "The Traveller's Rest," but "The Rest of the Traveller," mind you. That's poetical. I don't think it was Mr. Crispin's idea. I think it was Mr. Martin's—or Mrs. Crispin's. They're the clever ones. "The Headless Man" is merely grim—a grim turn of mind, Mr. Martin has—and it means, of course, no more than it says—a man without a head. And then again,' continued Stennet, whistling to his horses, whose backs were gleaming in the moonlight, 'the inn you're going to now—"The Traveller's Head"—well, inns are called "The King's Head" sometimes, aren't they, in the King's honour? Mr. Stephen goes one better than that. He dedicates his inn to the traveller himself.' By this time a spark of light had become visible in the distance, and Mr. Bond fixed his

eyes upon it. Once, for a moment, the spark went out, and he imagined that Stephen's head had passed in front of the living-room lamp. At this picture, anger seized him, and he wondered, amazed, why he was submitting so tamely to the commands—he could call them no less—of these oddly hospitable brothers. Fanned by his rage, the spark grew steadily bigger and brighter, until at last it had achieved the shape and size of a glowing window through which a man's face was grinning into the moonshine.

'Look here, what's all this?' cried Mr. Bond, starting from his fit of abstraction, and sliding to his feet.

'“The Traveller's Head,” sir,' answered Stennet, pointing aloft.

They both stared up at the sign above their heads; then Mr. Bond scanned the sprawling mass of the inn, and scowled at its surroundings. The night was still and vibrant, without sound; the endless forest stood like a wall of blue-white dust; and the traveller was about to raise his voice in wrath against the brothers Sasserach, when a commotion burst from the porch of the inn, and on to the moon-drenched grass there strode a tall and ungainly figure, swinging its arms, with a pack of creatures flopping and tumbling at its heels. 'Here *is* Mr. Stephen,' Stennet whispered, watching the approach; the landlord of 'The Traveller's Head' was smiling pleasantly, baring his intensely white teeth, and when he had reached the traveller he touched his forehead with a gesture that was at once respectful and overbearing.

'Mr. Bond, sir?' Mr. Bond muttered and bowed, and stared down at the landlord's children—large-headed, large-bellied, primitive creatures flopping round their father and pulling the skirts of the Inverness cape.

Father and children gathered round the traveller, who, lost within this little crowd, soon found himself at the

entrance of 'The Traveller's Head,' through which his new host urged him by the arm while two of the children pushed between them and ran ahead clumsily into the depths of the hall. The place was ill-lighted and ill-ventilated; and although Mr. Bond knew from experience exactly where the living-room would be situated, yet, after he had passed through its doorway, he found no further resemblance to those rooms wherein he had spent two stages of a curious adventure. The oil-lamp, standing in the centre of the round centre table, was without a shade; a moth was plunging audibly at the blackened chimney, hurling swift shadows everywhere over the ceiling and figured wall-paper; while, with the return of the children, a harmonium had started fitfully to grunt and blow.

'Let me take your cloak, your cape, Mr. Bond, sir,' said the landlord, and spread it with surprising care on one of the vast sofas that looked the larger because of their broken springs and the stuffing that protruded through their soiled covers: but at once the children seized upon the cape, and would have torn it to pieces had not Mr. Bond snatched it from them—at this, they cowered away from the stranger, fixing him with their eyes.

Amidst this congestion of people and furniture, Stephen Sasserach smiled and moved continuously, a stooping giant whom none but Mr. Bond obeyed. Here was the type of man whose appearance the traveller likened to that of the old-time executioner, the axe-man of the Middle Ages—harsh, loyal, simple, excessively domesticated, with a bulging forehead and untidy eyebrows and arms muscled and ready for deeds. Stephen kept no order in his house. Noise was everywhere, yet little seemed to be done. The children called their father Steve, and put out their tongues at him. They themselves were unlovely things, and their inner

natures seemed to ooze through their skins and form a surface from which the traveller recoiled. Three of their names were familiar to Mr. Bond. Here were Crispin and Martin and Stephen over again ; while Dorcas and Lydia were sisters whose only virtue was their mutual devotion.

The food at 'The Traveller's Head' was homely and palatable, and Stephen the father cooked it and served it liberally on chipped plates. He sat in his soiled blue shirt, his knotted arms looking richly sunburnt against the blue. He was never inarticulate, and this surprised Mr. Bond. On the contrary, he spoke rapidly and almost as if to himself, in a low rugged voice that was always a pleasure to hear. At moments he dropped into silence, his eyes shut, his eyebrows lowered, and his bulging forehead grew still more shiny with thought ; on such occasions, Dorcas and Lydia would steal to the harmonium, while, backed by a wail from the instrument, Crispin the Younger and Martin the Younger would jump from the sofas on to the floor.

Rousing himself at last, Stephen the Elder thumped his fist on the table, and turned in his chair to shout at the children : 'Get along with you, devils ! Get out your board, and *practise*, you little devils !' Whereupon the children erected a huge board, punctured with holes ; and each child began to hurl wooden balls through the holes and into the pockets behind them, with astonishing accuracy, except for Dorcas and Lydia. And presently their father reminded them : 'The moon is shining !' At once the children scuttled out of the room, and Mr. Bond never saw them again.

The noise and the figured wallpaper and the fat moth beating itself against the only source of light, had caused the traveller's head to grow heavy with sleep, and now it grew heavier still as he sat by the fire with Stephen after supper

was over, listening to the talk of that strangely attractive man in the soiled blue shirt. 'You fond of children, Mr. Bond, sir?' Mr. Bond nodded.

'Children and animals . . .' he murmured drowsily.

'One has to let them have their way,' sighed Stephen Sasserach. The rugged voice came clearly and soothingly into Mr. Bond's ears, until at last it shot up, vigorously, and ordered the guest to bed. Mr. Bond pulled himself out of his chair, and smiled, and said good night, and the moth flew into his face. Where were the children, he wondered. Their voices could not be heard. Perhaps they had fallen asleep, suddenly, like animals. But Mr. Bond found it difficult to imagine those eyes in bed, asleep.

Lying, some minutes later, in his own massive bed in this third of the Sasserach inns, with an extinguished candle on his bedside table, and gazing towards the open window from which he had drawn apart one of the heavy embroidered curtains, Mr. Bond fancied that he could hear faint cries of triumph, and sounds of knocking, coming from the direction of the forest. Starting up into complete wakefulness, he went to the window, and stared at the forest beyond the tufted grass. The sounds, he fancied, putting his hand to his ear, were as those given forth by the children during their game—but louder, as though the game were bigger. Perhaps strange animals were uttering them. Whatever their origin, they were coming from that depth of trees whose stillness was deepened by the light of the moon.

'Oh, God!' thought Mr. Bond, 'I'm sick to death of the moonlight!'—and with a sweep of the arm he closed the curtains, yet could not shut out the sounds of the forest, nor the sight of the frosted grass beneath the moon. Together, sound and sight filled him with foreboding, and his cheeks shook as he groped for the unlighted candle. He

must fetch his Inverness from below, fetch it at once, and get away while there was time. He found his host still sitting by the lamp in the living-room. Stephen's fist, lying on the table, was closed : he opened it, and out flew the moth.

'He thinks he has got away,' cried Stephen, looking up, and baring his teeth in a smile ; 'but he hasn't ! He never will !'

'I've come for my Inverness,' said Mr. Bond.

It was lying on one of the massive sofas. The fire was out, and the air chilly, and the depth of the room lay in darkness. An idea crossed the mind of Mr. Bond. He said, lifting up the cape : 'I thought I'd like it on my bed.' And he shivered to show how cold he was. From one of the folds the moth flew out, and whirled round the room like a mad thing.

'That's all right, Mr. Bond, sir. That's all right.' The man had fallen into a mood of abstraction ; his forehead shone in the rays of the lamp ; and the traveller left the room, holding himself with dignity in his gay dressing-gown, the Inverness hanging on his arm.

He was about to climb the staircase when a voice spoke softly in his ear, and wished him good night.

Stennet ! What was the man doing here ? Mr. Bond lifted his candle and gazed in astonishment at the back of Martin's manservant. The figure passed into the shadows, and the soft and deliberate ticking of the grandfather clock in the hall deepened the silence and fear of the moments that followed.

Mr. Bond ran to his room, locked himself in, and began to dress. His indigestion had seized him again. Inside and out, he was assailed by enemies. He parted the curtains, and peeped at the night. The shadow of the inn lay on the

yard and the tufted grass beyond, and one of the chimneys, immensely distorted, extended as far as the forest. The forest-wall itself was solid with moon-light; from behind it there came no longer the sounds of the knocking, and the silence set Mr. Bond trembling again.

'I shall escape at dawn,' he whispered, 'when the moon's gone down.'

Feeling no longer sleepy, he took from his knapsack a volume of *Mungo Park*, and, fully dressed, settled himself in an easy chair, with the curtains drawn again across the window, and the candle burning close beside him. At intervals he looked up from his book, frowning, running his eyes over the group of three pagodas, in pale red, endlessly repeated on the wall-paper. The restful picture made him drowsy, and presently he slept and snored and the candle burned on.

At midnight he was awakened by crashing blows on his door; the very candle seemed to be jumping with fear, and Mr. Bond sprang up in alarm.

'Yes? Who's that?' he called out, feebly.

'What in the name of God is *that*?' he whispered, as the blows grew louder.

'What are they up to now?' he asked aloud, with rising terror.

A splinter flew into the room, and he knew in a flash that the end of his journey had come. Was it Stephen or Stennet, Stephen or Stennet behind the door? The candle flickered as he blundered to and fro. He had no time to think, no time to act. He stood and watched the corner of the axe-blade working in the crack in the panel. 'Save me, save me,' he whispered, wringing his hands. They fluttered towards his Inverness, and struggled to push themselves into the obstinate sleeves. 'Oh, come on, come on,'

he whimpered, jerking his arms about, anger rising with terror. The whole room shuddered beneath the axe. He plunged at the candle and blew it out. In the darkness a ray of light shot through a crack in the door, and fell on the window curtain.

Mr. Bond remembered the creeper clinging beneath his window, and as soon as possible he was floundering, scrambling, slipping down to the house-shadowed garden below. Puffing out his cheeks, he hurried onward, while the thuds of the axe grew fainter in his ears. Brickbats lay in his path, a zinc tub wrenched at his cape and ripped it loudly, an iron hoop caught in his foot and he tottered forward with outstretched hands. And now, still running in the far-flung shadow of the house, he was on the tufted grass, whimpering a little, struggling against desire to look back over his shoulder, making for the forest that lay in the full beams of the moonlight. He tried to think, and could think of nothing but the size and safety of the shadow on which he was running. He reached the roof of the inn at last : plunged aside from his course of flight : and now he was running up the monstrous shadow of the chimney, thinking of nothing at all because the forest stood so near. Blindingly, a moon-filled avenue stretched before him : the chimney entered the chasm, and stopped : and it was as though Mr. Bond were a puff of smoke blowing into the forest depths. His shadow, swinging its monstrously distorted garments, led him to an open space at the end of the avenue. The thick-set trees encircled it with silence deeper than any that Mr. Bond had known. Here, in this glade, hung silence within a silence. Yet, halting abruptly, and pressing the flat of his hands to his ribs in the pain of his sudden burst of breathing, Mr. Bond had no ears for the silence, nor eyes for anything beyond the scene that faced him in the centre

of the forest glade : a group of upright posts, or stakes, set in a concave semicircle, throwing long shadows, and bearing on each summit a human skull. "The Traveller's Head," "The Headless Man," he whispered, stricken with terror, whipping his back on the skulls ; and there was Stephen Sasserach, in silhouette, leaping up the avenue, brandishing his axe, as though he were a demented wood-cutter coming to cut down trees.

The traveller's mind continued to run swiftly through the names of the three inns. "The Traveller's Head," he thought, "The Headless Man," "The Rest of the Traveller." He remembered the carrier pigeon that had flown ahead of him from Martin's ; he remembered the dust on the front of Martin's coat. . . .

He was staring at the figure in the soiled blue shirt. It had halted now, as still as a tree, on the verge of the moon-filled glade : but the whirling thoughts of Mr. Bond were on the verge of light more blinding than this ; they stopped, appalled : and the traveller fled beyond the skulls, fruitlessly searching for covert in the farthest wall of trees.

Then Stephen sprang in his wake, flinging up a cry that went knocking against the tree-trunks.

The echoes were echoed by Mr. Bond, who, whipping round to face his enemy, was wriggling and jerking anxiously in his Inverness cape, slipping it off at last, and swinging it in his hand, for his blood was up. And now he was deep in mortal combat, wielding his Inverness as the gladiators used to wield their nets in the old arenas. Time and again the axe and the cape engaged each other ; the one warding and hindering ; the other catching and ripping, clumsily enough, as though in sport. Around the skulls the two men fought and panted, now in darkness, now in the full light pouring down the avenue. Their moon-cast shadows

fought another fight together, wilder still than theirs. Then Stephen cried : ' Enough of this ! ' and bared his teeth for the first time since the strife had started.

' B—but you're my friend ! ' bleated Mr. Bond ; and he stared at the shining thread of the axe.

' The best you ever had, sir, Mr. Bond, sir ! ' answered Stephen Sasserach ; and, stepping back, the landlord of ' The Traveller's Head ' cut off the traveller's head.

The thump of the head on the sticks and leaves and grass of the forest glade was the first sound in the new and peaceful life of Mr. Bond, and he did not hear it ; but to the brothers Sasserach it was a promise of life itself, a signal that all was ready now for them to apply their respective talents busily and happily in the immediate future.

Stephen took the head of Mr. Bond, and with gentle though rather clumsy fingers pared it to a skull, grinning back at it with simple satisfaction when the deed was over, and after that he set it up as a fine mark for his brood of primitives, the game's endeavour being to see who could throw the ball into the eye-sockets ; and to his brother Martin, landlord of ' The Headless Man,' he sent the headless man, under the care of Stennet : and Martin, on a soft, autumnal day, reduced the headless body to a skeleton, with all its troubles gone, and through the days and nights he sat at work, with swift precision in his fingers, carving and turning, powdering his coat with dust, creating his figures and trinkets, his paper-knives and salad-spoons and fretted boxes and rare chess-men ; and to his brother Crispin, landlord of ' The Rest of the Traveller,' Martin sent the rest of the traveller, the soft and yielding parts, the scraps, the odds and ends, the miscellaneous pieces, all the internal lumber that had gone to fill the skin of the man from the

Midlands and to help to render him in middle years a prey to dyspepsia. Crispin received the parcel with a pursing of his small mouth, and a call to Myrtle in his clear falsetto : 'Stennet's here !'

She answered from the kitchen. 'Thank you, Cris !' Her hands were soft and swollen as she scoured the tureen. The back of the inn was full of reflected sunlight, and her dark hair shone.

'It's too late in the season now,' she said, when tea-time came. 'I don't suppose we'll have another one before the spring.'

Yet she was wrong. That very evening, when the moon had risen from beyond the valley, Myrtle murmured : 'There he comes,' and continued to stir her ladle in the bowl.

Her husband strolled into the hall, and wound the clock.

He took the lamp from its bracket on the wall.

He went to the door, and flung it open to the moonlight, holding the lamp above his head.

'Come in, come in,' he said, to the stranger standing there ; 'she is cooking a *lovely* broth to-night !'

GREY LAG IN CUTCH.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL A. H. E. MOSSE, C.I.E.

It was once my good fortune to spend three winter months in the out-of-the-way State of Cutch, in Western India. During that period I enjoyed some of the finest small-game shooting that has ever come my way—Duck in variety, Sandgrouse of four species, including that grand sporting bird the Imperial Sandgrouse, Black Partridge, Snipe, Quail. One has, however, at one time or another, had good days with all of these birds elsewhere. But there is one bird, whose acquaintance I was privileged to make in Cutch, that I have never met again in any numbers, or at close quarters at all—the old Grey Lag Goose. The manner of that first acquaintance may be worth recording.

Some miles from the northern shore of the Rann of Cutch, there is, or used to be, an area of shallow water perhaps two or three square miles in extent, which the cold weather found collected in a depression known as the Dandh, and where the geese were wont to congregate in thousands. It would profit little to attempt to get within reach of these wary creatures upon the water, but it had been found that the birds were in the habit of resorting at dawn to certain places a few miles away, for the purpose of collecting the gravel, or rather small pieces of quartz there found in abundance, which the proper working of the goose's interior economy appears to require. The consequence used to be the establishment of some three or four, or more, regular lines of flight, along each of which the different goose battalions made their separate excursions morning after morning. It was a remote

and sparsely inhabited part of the country—as may be judged from the fact that that shy and rare animal, the Wild Ass of Western Asia, is still to be found not far away—while at that time of day the activities of the world in general had not yet begun. So the geese were accustomed to fly low, and ordinarily there was none to interfere with their routine except on the infrequent occasions when the Maharao of Cutch would arrange a shooting party, camping in the vicinity for two or three days, to take advantage of this habit.

It is a number of years since I was privileged to be a member of such a party, but I have still a vivid recollection of that morning's ride from our camp to the Dandh a couple of miles away. It was an hour before the dawn, that stillest hour of the twenty-four, when the voices of the night are hushed, the voices of the day not yet awakened. The keen cold air was filled with a strange tense sense of expectation. All nature was waiting, waiting for a sign that once again the darkness was passing. And then the sign came. A moment before there had been nothing ; but now, faint, elusive, felt rather than seen, but unmistakably there on the horizon, was the quickening of the incipient glow of sunrise. Immediate was the response, as from the dimness ahead of us there rose a questioning single note, then another, more decided—a grey goose was awake. During the next five minutes or so there sounded but an occasional sleepy 'honk !' and then, with the slight but definite brightening of the eastern sky, almost in a moment to the whole marsh came the consciousness that day was here, and it was not one goose but hundreds that were passing each other the time of day, or discussing the order of the coming flight in a continuous gabbling chorus.

Meanwhile we had reached our destinations—two guns,

my host and myself, being posted to this particular line—and took up our positions, 100 yards apart and 1,000 or so from the water's edge, each in a shallow pit, with a screen in front consisting of a sort of hurdle fixed obliquely into the earth and constructed of a heather-like plant that grew all around.

The gabbling on the marsh grows louder to speed the vanguard on its way and, before we had realised their approach in the still dim light, the shadowy forms of a trio of big birds has passed us by not twenty yards away. Three minutes later—and now we spot them in time, low against the ever lightening horizon—a party of half a dozen flies straight at us, honking as they come. Just before they reach us the leader detects something unusual below, and they swerve aside and upwards. Too late ! they are within easy range, as bang go both barrels. And then they are gone, all six of them, leaving not a feather behind !

It was not their swerve that saved them, solely their deceptive pace. Of course I had been warned that a goose travels a good deal faster than it appears to do, and imagined I had taken due heed of the advice. But this is one of those matters in which a man can learn only from personal experience. Your mind may recall the warning, when the time comes to act upon it. But your eye thinks it knows better, insisting that these big birds with leisurely beating pinions cannot possibly be moving at any great pace, and, whatever your previous intention, it is the eye—if subconsciously—which controls the gun at the moment of action. Result, repeated and exasperating humiliation, until the will takes over charge.

So it was with me. The geese came on in bands of varying size, some too far to one side, some that took heed of the firing ahead and rose out of shot ; but I had many chances

within range. Subsequently I did better, but on this first day I ought, shooting at all respectably, to have brought down at least a score of birds. Actually my personal bag was eight. Yet eight great grey geese to a shoulder gun! Nothing could prevent that from being a notable day in one's shikar experience.

During the thirty or forty minutes that the exodus lasted I must, although it was said not to be a very good season, have seen upwards of a thousand geese pass me by. Individual parties, so far as I remember, did not exceed thirty or forty birds, and were frequently much fewer in number, sometimes twos and threes. Now and then they came almost in line, but more often an irregular V formation was the rule. Increased gabbling generally heralded the rising from the water of one of the larger parties, and during the flight there was usually a good deal of honking on the wing.

Waiting for the home flight, we found that the first of the returning geese made their appearance between 9 and 10 a.m. But now they flew high and offered few chances, and only a bird or two was added to the bag.

Sometimes, I was told, the guns awaited the geese with successful results at the terminal rendezvous—when this had been ascertained—of the outward flight, instead of at its start. In any case it struck me as surprising that the sound of firing did not divert such wary birds to a greater extent than was the case, either to a higher elevation, or to one side of their regular line of flight. Even after two days' shooting the same line would often, though not always, be followed, and the geese continue to fly low at the start.

The Dandh can hardly be unique. There may be other places where a similar method of flight-shooting at geese could be and perhaps is employed. But I have never heard of quite the same thing anywhere else.

ARTHUR OF BRITAIN.

BY THE HON. RALPH SHIRLEY.

FEW historical problems have aroused more widespread interest than the question of the basis of truth underlying the Arthurian Legend. On the one hand Arthur's very existence has been openly doubted and on the other the story of his life has been made the plaything of poet and romancer for upwards of a thousand years. In many of these romances Arthur himself is merely the central figure that weaves them together, playing no conspicuous part in the stories themselves. One example of this that may be cited is the quest of the Holy Grail, a quest which tradition implies that King Arthur regarded with little favour.

Another striking fact is that the story of Arthur has spread over many parts of the Continent of Europe, notably France, and taken root in countries far removed from the only credible scene of his activities.

It is not improbable that British fugitives from the conquering Anglo-Saxons spread the story in Brittany where many of them settled among their Breton kindred overseas. But in addition to this the Norman Conquest of England linked up the countries on either side of the Channel, the early Norman kings being no less interested in their Continental possessions than they were in their English ones.

Furthermore, from the British point of view the victorious Normans might well appear in the light of avengers over their Saxon foes and in any case it was certainly with the advent of the Normans that the name and fame of "King Arthur" was resuscitated in Great Britain. It was in truth

hardly to be supposed that the British leader who inflicted upon them so many severe defeats, if the earliest records are to be accepted, would meet with due recognition from the Saxon settlers whose ancestors he had so successfully defied. Hence doubtless the oblivion into which his name fell for a long period outside of Wales and Cornwall.

It is undoubtedly in these earliest records, fragmentary and confused as they admittedly are, and not in such chronicles as those of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a romancer who wrote with an eye to effect rather than a desire to produce a genuine historical treatise, that we must look for whatever grains of truth are to be met with relative to this quasi-legendary hero of the British race.

Now the earliest document of which we have any knowledge in which Arthur is actually mentioned is the *Historia Brittonum*, the compilation of which was the work of a certain Welshman of the name of Nennius (or Nynniau) who lived in the eighth century. He was, he tells us, a pupil of Elfodd (Elbodugus) bishop of Bangor in North Wales. He is speaking of the growth of the Saxon population, immigrants from the German and Danish coasts, and the increase in their strength during the times of Hengist and his son Otha, 'from whom,' he observes, 'sprang the Kings of the men of Kent.'

'Then,' he continues, 'Arthur fought against them in those days, together with the Kings of the Britons, but he himself was the commander in the battles.'¹

It will be noted that he does not speak of Arthur as himself king but rather as generalissimo—on behalf of a number of petty monarchs. He then proceeds to cite a list of twelve battles in which Arthur overthrew the Saxon invaders, giving the names of the localities in which they took place,

¹ Ipse dux erat bellorum.

the twelfth battle (that at Mount Badon) being the most decisive of them all, and leading, as we gather, to a fairly protracted period of peace.

'The first battle,' he writes, 'was at the mouth of the river which is called Glein. The second, third, fourth and fifth were upon another river which is called Dubglas and is in the region of Linnuis; the sixth upon the river Bassas; the seventh in the wood of Celidon, that is Cat Coet Celidon¹; the eighth at the castle Guinnion, when Arthur bore the image of the Virgin Mary upon his shoulders and the pagans were put to flight on that day and a great slaughter made of them through the might of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of St. Mary, his mother. The ninth battle was fought at the city of Legion, the tenth on the banks of the river which is called Tribruit, and the eleventh on the mountain called Agned. The twelfth battle was on Mount Badon where there fell nine hundred and sixty men before a single onset of Arthur, nor had any but himself a share in their downfall and in all the battles he was the victor. But the enemy, while they were overthrown in all their battles, sought help from Germany and continually increased in number, and they brought kings from Germany to rule over those who were in Britain up to the time of the reign of Ida, who was the first king in Beornicia.'

It is a curious fact that in spite of the details given as regards the localities in which the battles were fought there is not a single one of them which we are in a position to identify. Even in the case of the last and greatest battle of all, the battle of Badon Hill, countless guesses have been made as to where it took place without any sort of consensus of opinion having been arrived at, except perhaps that it was somewhere in the South of England.

Guest, in his *Origines Celticae*, argues for Badbury in Dorset as the most probable site. Others have identified it with

¹ i.e. the battle of Celidon Hill.

Bath or some locality in the valley of the Severn. Other suggestions have identified it with Badwyn in the Kennet Valley, with Baydon on the Roman Road, south of Liddington Camp, or with Beedon in Berkshire.

It would seem that a more easterly site, such as that in Dorset, consorts best with the probabilities of the case, if, as seems clear we must regard the battle of Badon Hill as the final decisive battle of a series in which the Saxon invaders were put to rout and driven back at least as far as their settlements in Kent and along the Eastern Coast line, for it would appear that Kent had already become a petty Saxon kingdom and it is improbable that the ruling Saxon chiefs, still less the Saxon settlers, were driven back by Arthur across the seas to their original homes. Rather I think we must suppose them settling down side by side with the British and accepting, at least temporarily, the situation brought about by the British victories. This is in accordance with the picture drawn by Gildas in his religious homily *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* who speaks of the struggle between Briton and Saxon as continuing with varying fortunes 'until the year of the siege of Badon Hill and almost the last great slaughter inflicted upon the rascally crew,' in spite of which we learn that the invaders continued to increase in numbers and to land on the coasts of Britain from over the sea, for Arthur, it is painfully clear, lacked a fleet to co-operate with his military arm.

Gildas long antedates Nennius, being a sixth century authority, but he writes as a religious bigot imbued with Roman sympathies and his homily is full of denunciation of the iniquities of the British, to which he appears to ascribe the disasters that befell them, and though he alludes, as we have seen, to the Saxon reverse at Badon Hill, he makes no allusion to the British generalissimo or indeed to any

other British commander with the exception of Ambrosius Aurelianus, the last of the Romans who, he says, was the first to check the Saxon tide of victories. It may seem strange, if Arthur be accepted as an historical personage, that Gildas should not mention his name, but we must bear in mind in the first place his anti-British animus and in the second that he was writing a religious homily and diatribe against the degenerate Britons rather than a history. Bede, the Saxon historian, also mentions the battle of 'Baddesdown Hill,' but doubtless for similar reasons makes no allusion to Arthur. It is to be presumed that Aurelianus preceded Arthur in point of time and the guess may be hazarded that Arthur was Aurelianus's immediate successor as Commander-in-Chief of the allied army of the British kings, and probably in part contemporaneous with him and general under him. We may note that there is no historical justification for Arthur's supposed rôle as a British king, though apparently that position was occupied by Aurelianus. The conception of Arthur as a king was first developed by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* in the twelfth century, a history in which fact and fiction are doubtless blended but where fiction inordinately predominates over fact. Geoffrey's aim was to 'tell the tale,' not to write *bonâ fide* history, and nothing came amiss to his facile pen which could lend colour and romance to a sort of British *Æneid* mainly devoted to the glorification and gross exaggeration of Arthur's achievements and in which he traces the descent of the British from Brutus the Son of *Æneas* !

Needless to say these romances are in the nature of a red herring drawn across the trail of historical fact and serve merely to mislead the painstaking investigator in his arduous task.

To return then to historical evidences, scant as these most

regrettably are, we have first the early reference to the Battle of Badon in Gildas's homily which he refers to as having taken place in the year of his birth, probably A.D. 516 or 518, though some would put it as far back as 503 or 504. Secondly we have the fuller account of Nennius in his *Historia Brittonum*, where Arthur is alluded to as Commander-in-Chief. Thirdly we have two references in the *Annales Cambriæ*. These annals have been interpolated in the Harleian MS. of the *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius between the Northumbrian History and the so called *Mirabilia*, a record of marvels connected with Arthur's career the authorship of which is unknown but most of which must be taken with a considerable grain of salt. The Annals are in the nature of a chronicle of events commencing with the fifth century A.D. and ending with the record of the death of a Prince of South Wales in 956. This latest record will probably supply us with an approximate date for the compilation. There are two entries relating to Arthur in these Annals. The first is for the year A.D. 516 (or 518) and runs as follows: 'The battle of Badon in which Arthur bore the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ for three days and three nights on his shoulders and the Britons were victorious.'

The second is for A.D. 537, or as one authority gives it A.D. 539, and notes as occurring on that date 'The battle of Camlan in which Arthur and Medraut fell.'

This is of course 'that last weird battle of the West' of which Tennyson sings in his 'Morte d'Arthur' and in which both Arthur and his traitorous nephew Modred met their doom.

To these three comparatively early records should perhaps be added two passages from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* completed in 1125. William of Malmesbury is accounted the most important of the twelfth-century his-

torians and his statements, late as they are, must carry weight in view of the high reputation of the writer.

The first occurs in connection with an account of the Saxon invasion and is as follows :

‘ On the death of Vortimer the strength of the Britons grew faint, their diminished hopes went backwards and straight-way they would have come to ruin, had not Ambrosius, the sole survivor of the Romans, who was monarch of the nation after Vortigern, repressed the overweening barbarians through the distinguished achievements of the war-like Arthur. This is that Arthur of whom the trifling of the Britons talks such nonsense even to-day ; a man clearly worthy not to be dreamed of in fallacious fables, but to be proclaimed in veracious histories, as one who long sustained his tottering country and gave the shattered minds of his fellow citizens an edge for war. Finally, at the siege of Mount Badon, relying upon the image of the mother of the Lord which he had sewn upon his armour, he made head single handed against nine hundred of the enemy and routed them with incredible slaughter.’

The other relevant passage in the *Gesta Regum* alludes to the alleged discovery of the tomb of Gawain or Walwen, Arthur’s nephew in Wales during the reign of William the Conqueror.

Gawain is described as the ‘ not degenerate nephew of Arthur by his sister ’ and is stated to have reigned in that part of Britain which is still called Walweitha.

‘ He was,’ says our author, ‘ driven out of his kingdom by the brother and nephew of Hengist but not until he had compensated for his exile by much damage wrought upon them, worthily sharing the praise of his uncle in that they deferred for many years the ruin of their falling country.’

‘ The tomb,’ he tells us, ‘ was found in the time of King William upon the seashore fourteen feet in length, but the

tomb of Arthur is nowhere to be seen whence ancient ditties fable that he is yet to come.'

After William of Malmesbury we find ourselves in the region of pure romance which rapidly gains accretions of one form or another. It may be asked why these romances in a number of instances, notably in that of the Holy Grail, took religious shape, and why Arthur came to be thought of as the foremost of Christian champions. Partly doubtless because his story fell into ecclesiastical hands and it must be remembered to how great an extent learning and literature were almost what one might call ecclesiastical preserves in the Middle Ages, and how they dominated artistic production of all kinds, but secondly without doubt because Arthur was in actual fact the champion of Christian Britain against its heathen foes; its last mainstay against a wave of barbaric invasion. How far the bearing by Arthur of an effigy of the Virgin was actual fact or ecclesiastical invention we need not stop to enquire, but symbolically at any rate the story represented a genuine truth. Christianity in the person of Arthur and his British armies was engaged in a life and death struggle with heathendom. It was in short Christ versus Thor. The Grail legend invented by ecclesiastics centuries after was therefore aptly enough in the light of mediaeval mentality incorporated into the Arthurian cycle.

The aim of this article is not to deal with these legendary accretions which multiplied amazingly around Arthur as their centre but rather to indicate the probable basis of historical fact that underlay them, slight indeed as this is in comparison with the luxuriant growth of romance for which Geoffrey of Monmouth was principally responsible. For it was undoubtedly he in his *Historia Regum Britannie* who set the ball rolling in a manner so devoid of scruple as to shock some even of the most eminent of his own con-

temporaries. Thus William of Newburgh, writing about A.D. 1190 observed that it

'was manifest that everything this person (i.e. Geoffrey of Monmouth) wrote about Arthur and his successors and his predecessors after Vortigern, was made up, partly by himself and partly by others, whether from an inordinate love of lying or for the sake of pleasing the Britons.'

With writers such as Gildas, Nennius, and indeed William of Malmesbury, we are dealing with *bonâ fide* records, whatever errors they may have fallen into through lack of knowledge or indeed personal predilections, but it will have been observed that the traditional King Arthur of Romance does not exist for them, but rather a Commander-in-Chief of the British armies whose sole *métier* was to stem the tide of Anglo-Saxon invasion and, as far as was then possible, to retain Britain for the British race.

The name Artorius was not unknown in Rome. It occurs in Juvenal and in the feminine form Artoria in the annals of Tacitus, and there is no call to associate it, as Sir John Rhys has done, with the fantastic conception of a mythological British Deity. This idea is surely too far fetched and recalls the attempts to explain national heroes in terms of the Sun myth, a fashion little in vogue to-day. Probably Arthur was of mixed Roman and British blood.

Messrs. Collingwood and Myers, in their volume on *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, published by the Oxford Clarendon Press,¹ contend that we must envisage Arthur in the light of a commander of a mobile field-army.

'One corollary,' they write, 'is that the sites of his twelve battles must not be sought in any one part of Britain.'

¹ *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*. By R. G. Collingwood, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy, and J. N. L. Myers, University Lecturer in Modern History, 1936.

Hence, we may observe, the reason why his name is found locally as far north as Edinburgh and as far south as Cornwall. The names of his battles, these authorities contend, are obviously genuine.

'Not only are they part of the oldest tradition but there is hardly one whose site is established beyond controversy, whereas a forger would have offered corroborative detail by putting them at well known places, as Geoffrey of Monmouth takes Arthur to Winchester, York, Lincoln, and so forth. The story of the twelfth, at first sight so improbable, only needs interpretation to set the seal of truth on the whole. When it is said that 960 Saxons fell under the attack of Arthur alone, the implication is that on this one occasion he was co-operating with no local king but was using his own force by itself.'

A further point of importance is made in this latest volume which touches on the Arthurian problem. The late Roman Empire, it is pointed out, was the age which established the ascendancy of heavy cavalry clothed in chain mail over infantry.

'In 378 the battle of Adrianople had proved that a charge of heavy cavalry could roll up and destroy a vastly superior force of the best Roman infantry . . . Any Romano-Briton of the late fifth century educated enough to know something about warfare as practised on the Continent in his own time, would understand the value and use of heavy cavalry. The Saxon invaders were infantry fighting with spears . . . Their tactical discipline was elementary. Against such an enemy, a small force of ordinary Roman cavalry resolutely led must prove invincible.'

If Arthur, it is argued, came of a Roman family such ideas would be commonplaces to him. If he was a man of sufficient acuteness to carry them out, the story of his successes is explained. Though these are conjectures, they

are plausible ones, and the fact that the traditions concerning Arthur represent him as the creator of a band of Knights adds to their probability.

While the Romans were still in Britain the 'Count of the Saxon shore,' deputed to keep off hostile attacks on the East Coast, had six regiments of cavalry to three of infantry, so that it is clear that before the retirement of the Romans the vital importance of the cavalry arm had been clearly recognized.

Lost in the mists of Celtic tradition is the explanation of the exact significance of The Table Round and the story of Arthur's sword Excalibur, but the facts on which such romances were founded are not so entirely submerged by accretions of alien matter as to make it impossible to outline, however roughly, the career of one who strove, for a time at least successfully, to rescue a tottering state from impending ruin.

Arthur, it is admitted, belongs to the darkest period of British history, the period following the break-up of the Roman Empire. The Roman legions had left the islanders to their fate. They were attacked by Picts and Scots from the north and by Anglo-Saxons and Danes from the east and were not given sufficient time to organize effectively their powers of resistance before the invading hordes had overrun the land and established themselves permanently in Kent and in a number of other localities on the Eastern Coast. It was at this point that the Roman Ambrosius Aurelianus was able to organize a successful resistance to the further advance of the enemy and following him 'the warlike Arthur,' accepted as generalissimo by the petty British kings, drove back the Saxons in twelve pitched battles and established a state of peace in Britain for upwards of twenty years until by an act of treachery on the part of

one of his 'Knights of the Round Table' he met with defeat and death somewhere about the year A.D. 539.

So at least we would piece together and interpret the meagre historical records that remain of one who in the words of a biographer ¹ 'stalks athwart the path of history as a shadowy apparition clothed in the mists of legend.'

¹ W. Lewis Jones.

'KINDLE IN ME—'

*Kindle in me, O Lord, a fire,
A flame to scorch and sear,
To burn up every base desire
With the black spawn of fear.*

*When disillusion stalks the land,
And honour veils her eyes,
May I the enemy withstand,
Nor confuse truth with lies.*

*When love, deserting, must endure
The common traitor's fate,
Grant me the courage to ensure
No parleying at the gate.*

*When that proves false which I found true,
And beauty weeps in shame,
Lord, take my heart and burn it through
With sacrificial flame.*

RUTH ANDERSON.

THE MYSTERIOUS HOBBY OF STAMP-COLLECTING.

BY GUY BOAS.

AN interesting philosophic essay might be written on the nature of hobbies : how one man does for amusement what another does for his living. The horse-rider's relaxation is his groom's daily labour : the chauffeur is paid to drive the same car which his master drives for pleasure ; 'gentlemen' and 'players' are distinguished in cricket only by their separate pavilions and by initials. A hobby, says the Oxford Dictionary, is a 'favourite occupation not one's main business,' which implies—not without irony—that our main business is not our favourite occupation. I think Callisthenes right, when in one of his paragraphs commending the policy of Selfridge's he suggested that a man's best work is done when his work is his hobby and his hobby his work. But to enlarge on that would make a sermon, and preaching is not my hobby.

Of all hobbies stamp-collecting is perhaps the most curious. Like racing it is the sport of kings—the sport of our late King George V and of President Roosevelt—yet, unlike racing, it is within the reach of every child, and almost every child appears to practise it. It is a game 'for mugs and millionaires' it has been said, which is hard on the majority of collectors, as they are not millionaires. But the quip does no harm : year by year the number of philatelists increases, the stamp trade vies with the motor trade in expanding business ; every seventh man in America,

we are told, is a stamp-collector ; Governments swell their resources by issues, frankly intended to plunder the pockets of the mugs ; the millionaires, spurning the stock-market and precious stones, invest their money in stamp rarities, eight thousand five hundred pounds is refused for a British Guiana stamp, which is indignantly returned to its vault in New York until some philatelic Croesus will do it financial justice, and, whatever the cynical and inferior may say, stamp-collecting flourishes in palace and villa and class-room, and, like the sea which wetted Canute, and Woman's Suffrage, whether you like it or not, it will not be denied.

Now, what is the attraction which circles these small pieces of paper as with a halo ? A jewel you can wear, a piece of china you can display, a Corot will glorify your walls or a Persian rug your floor, but a stamp you can only shut away in a book, gumming it as you pin down a butterfly, and hiding it out of sight almost as though it were a shameful possession. Yet see with what gleaming eyes that collector will open his book to survey his treasures : no Silas Marner every hugged his gold with more passionate affection than your philatelist will drink in the sight of his gems, whether he be your collector of means, gloating over his ' Woodblock ' Triangulars from the Cape, his Ceylon ' Pence,' his Sydney views, or the schoolboy counting his Guatemala parrots, his Malay tigers or the small fry from his latest threepenny packet, the same strange light will be in their eyes, ' a thousand twangling instruments will hum about their ears,' for, like Caliban, they will be in the grip of magic, and let the scoffer deny, if he dare, that in this cold, cruel world, where magic is in increasing danger of being suffocated by petrol fumes and exploded by bombs, the stamp-album, like poetry, is a link with salvation.

It is easy thus to state the effect of stamps : but we are

no nearer yet to detecting the cause, the secret of their magic, the ingredients of their spell.

Geography and History : these are pretty wide terms, yet they are epitomised, are they not, in our postal flakes of paper ? The glamour of dead Kings and Queens, Emperors and Mikados, Presidents and Sultans, the sinister face of the notorious King ' Bomba ' of Sicily or the mild features of Leopold I of the Belgians, transcendently clear on the finest line-engraved stamps of the Continent, the pathetic infant head of King Alfonso XIII, the death-mask of Peter I of Serbia, the uneasy frown of the tragic black-bearded Nicholas II of Russia, the tranquil majesty of our own Victoria—he must be blind indeed to historical and regal glamour who does not perceive a factor here in the spell. The Gullfoss Falls of Iceland, the Panama Canal, Quebec in 1700, Colombo Harbour, the Kremlin, the Jungfrau, Niagara, to recall only a few from the hundreds of stamp pictures which tell how the Post Office, like Puck, has set a girdle round the earth : thus does the fascination of Geography—the lure of the strange and unknown, the enchantment of distance—come home to us, not in dull class-room lessons or dead lecture-halls, but in the shape of a scrap of paper, and a scrap of paper no more than that famous one of 1914 to be despised. For a game little fellow he is ; not only does he picture that distant place, he has come from it—come from somewhere farther in the world than perhaps you or I shall ever travel—and all the long journey, he has (literally) stuck to his job ; stuck to it, maybe, over hundreds of miles of snow, and desert, and ocean, before depositing his charge on your safe breakfast-table. Now are we beginning to comprehend a reverence for the stamp, and why the mugs who, after the journey is done, offer the weary little messenger a safe asylum in their albums are not perhaps such mugs after

all? Looked at from this angle a stamp-album is on a footing with the Chelsea Hospital for pensioners or the Lost Dogs' Home.

We next come to the value of stamps as an item of fascination, an aspect not entirely easy to treat with taste. 'No gentleman values his stamps,' said the Victorian schoolmaster. I cannot agree with him. The price of a stamp is not an index of any intrinsic value, but a guide to its rarity, and rarity is of justifiable interest. One of the rarest stamps in the world, valued at five thousand pounds, an unused copy of the twopenny 'Post Office' Mauritius, is beautiful in colour and design, but the rarest stamp of all, the unique one-cent 1856 black-on-magenta stamp of British Guiana, valued now at about ten thousand pounds, is in appearance nothing but an ugly scrap of paper, with the corners gone, and too dirty even to provide a clear photograph. There is an idea current that as stamps can be bought from dealers he who has the longest purse must necessarily have the best collection. Happily this is not the case. Of course anyone by passing money over a counter or bidding recklessly at auctions can accumulate stamps, but accumulating is not collecting. No one but the novice attempts to collect the stamps of the whole world—such an enterprise would end prematurely in surfeit and bankruptcy as surely as an early demise would be the lot of a wine-drinker who embarked on drinking a mammoth cellar. A tract of the earth, a country, or group of countries, or a special line in stamps such as those issued between certain dates or those bearing a particular type of design, must be selected, and the collection composed within that limit. Now if the man of means thinks that by going to dealers or auctions he can immediately purchase all the stamps of the countries or types he has selected—assuming of course that he has set out for himself

an objective worthy to be called collecting—he will be sharply disillusioned. Say a collector embarks on a large field such as Ceylon or even on a small one such as Nova Scotia, it may take him months or years to find—regardless of what he can pay—a specimen of every stamp of the country worthy in respect of condition to be included in his album. This question of condition is of cardinal importance. It is not difficult to find poor copies of most stamps—stamps cut into, with margins or perforations lacking, thinned, off-centre, faded, or hideously post-marked—but to find what are technically known as ‘superb’ copies of rare stamps, with colour, margins, and every other detail, precisely as it should be, so often requires infinite patience, perspicacity and zeal, that no one who really knows the game of philately has any fear that money can spoil the sport. So much of the virtue of a collection too depends on the skill and neatness with which it is set out, and the attendant information provided by intelligent writing up, all of which has nothing to do with the purse. Many a display, where the zone has been intelligently chosen—to illustrate perhaps some historical epoch—can be made by means of stamps costing only a few shillings, and is far more worthy of commendation and calculated to give pleasure than the undiscerning heaping together of high-priced stamps in morocco-covered albums by collectors with more brass than brains.

Some make the rule that they will never buy stamps, but confine themselves to the gifts of fortune which come on their letters and those of family and friends. Such a rule has very much to commend it in the case of young children—and perhaps too of sick persons—but one must go this far in defence of money to say that no collection made without buying can hope to progress any considerable distance nowadays in respect of completeness or rarity.

Can money be made in stamp-collecting by amateurs? The answer is that it can, but usually isn't, and—in my view—ought not to be. Professional dealers and auctioneers who make their livelihood by stamps are entitled on all transactions to their profit, the amateur is entitled to his pleasure. It is a foolish amateur who buys stamps with so little knowledge and taste that, should he wish to sell them again, he would fail to get back a reasonable portion of the sum he originally expended, but beyond that I think he has no right to expect monetary return. To safeguard his legitimate financial interests an amateur will not go far wrong if he buys only from dealers of first-class repute, and I would like to testify from my own modest experience to the high standard of honesty, courtesy and straightforward dealing prevalent among first-class stamp firms at the present time. Surprising windfalls, however, come both to professional and amateur alike at times, and the part which money plays in the romance of philately must not be too Puritanically disregarded or true perspective will be lost. Let one or two famous instances be cited.

The first colony to follow the Mother Country in the issue of stamps was Mauritius. In 1847 the local watch-maker, James Barnard, of Saint Louis, was instructed to engrave some designs resembling the English ones. Barnard succeeded in engraving a red penny and a blue twopenny on a small copper plate such as is used for visiting-cards. Instead, however, of inscribing the words 'Post Paid' as he should have done, he copied the post-mark of Mauritius which read 'Post Office Mauritius.' Owing to this error these stamps would probably never have been issued; but it happened that the Governor of Mauritius was about to give a ball, and his wife was so anxious to use the new stamps on her invitations that they were thus put into circulation,

to become in due course (as they were never reprinted with this wrong wording) among the most famous of rarities.

Madame Borchard, wife of a Bordeaux merchant, was looking through some old correspondence in 1865 when she happened on a letter despatched from Mauritius to France which contained on the envelope a specimen both of the penny and twopenny 'Post Office' Mauritius. As her album made no reference to stamps with this wording she attached no importance to them and exchanged them with a friend. They passed in due course into the collection of Count von Ferrari. During the Great War the Count's stamps were seized by the French Government on the grounds that he was an enemy alien: they were put up for auction, and Madame Borchard's two Mauritius stamps fetched over two thousand pounds. Madame Borchard, however, who rivalled Mr. Baldwin's power in the early days of his premiership of recovering from misfortunes, discovered some years later among her husband's letters no less than fourteen more specimens of the watchmaker's mistake!

It was a schoolboy, also of Bordeaux, some thirty-five years ago who discovered two 'Post Office' Mauritius among some old papers. A Paris philatelist bought them for forty thousand francs, and from him they passed into the collection of the late American millionaire, Mr. Arthur Hind, who bought them for the bagatelle of eleven thousand pounds.

The finest unused specimens of the twopenny 'Post Office' Mauritius, which was purchased for his collection by King George V, was discovered seventy-five years ago in the stamp album of a schoolboy in Scotland. If this stamp were to come into the market again, it would be likely to fetch at least five thousand pounds.

A curious commercial incident happened in connection

with the famous Cape Triangulars. Stanley Gibbons, founder of the famous firm, when he was a boy in Plymouth, persuaded his father, who was a chemist, to let him display stamps for sale in the corner of his shop window. Two sailors, returned from South Africa, walked into the shop one day and asked Stanley whether he would buy some old stamps which they had in a sack and which they said they had bought in a raffle at Cape Town. Being asked to show the stamps, they emptied out from the sack hundreds upon hundreds of Cape Triangulars. Mr. Gibbons, Junior, to their astonished delight gave them five pounds for the sackful. They thought he was mad, and Stanley probably thought the same of them. How the tars spent the five pounds we do not know—though we may guess: the handsome profit made by the boy when he resold his purchase may well have been a factor in establishing the famous firm. The rarest stamp in the world, the one-cent British Guiana, was, like the Mauritius 'Post Office' stamps, the result of an error. In 1856, since the supply of four-cent stamps was running out in Guiana, and more were urgently required, the local printers were asked to do the work. Taking a small block illustration of a ship which headed shipping information in the island's *Gazette*, they inscribed the motto of the colony above and below it, adding the words 'Postage British Guiana. Four Cents.' They then printed off a very few stamps on coloured paper. In some cases the copies were by mistake marked 'One Cent' instead of 'Four Cents.' The error was detected and rectified, but one erroneous one-center slipped through and started on its romantic career of becoming the champion world rarity. For sixteen years it disappeared completely; then, in 1872, it was discovered by a boy, Vernon Vaughan, attached to a faded letter. The boy, thinking the stamp too shabby for his collection, sold

it to an adult friend for six shillings. The friend sold his collection later to a Liverpool stamp dealer, and the one-cent Guiana found its way in due course into Count von Ferrari's collection. When the Count's collection was auctioned in Paris, Mr. Hind of America secured the one-cent for seven thousand pounds. In the autumn of 1935 the bid of eight thousand five hundred pounds was refused for the stamp in London, and it resides at present in the vaults of a New York bank from which any of us could probably retrieve it if we offered ten thousand pounds.

The most recent financial stamp romance was in connection with the twopence-halfpenny Jubilee issue of George V. On June 28, 1935, a collector in North London sent his secretary to buy some twopence-halfpenny stamps in a small post office in Edmonton. Noticing that the stamps were a curious shade of blue—Prussian blue instead of the normal cobalt blue—he dashed to the post office with no little method in his madness, and bought their entire stock—three hundred and nineteen—of these stamps. He submitted the stamps to a London dealer who offered him sixpence each for them, which he refused. Subsequently it was discovered, that, when the Jubilee stamps were being prepared, they were submitted to the King for approval, and that His Majesty had decided against the Prussian-blue colouring for the twopence-halfpennies in favour of the lighter blue. In error, however, three sheets, each of 120 stamps, were printed of the Prussian hue and found their way to Edmonton. A sheet was displayed at the Dorland Hall Stamp Exhibition in 1936, carefully guarded, I remember, by a formidable official, and the value attached to it was five thousand pounds. John Gilpin's gallop through Edmonton is famous, but the gallop of the philatelist to the Edmonton post office bids fair to rival it, and I would that Cowper, or if not he, Wordsworth,

who besides being a poet was an official 'distributor' of stamps, could be released from the shades to commemorate the journey in another ballad.

From cash to beauty. What is the most beautiful stamp in the world, or what stamps may be numbered among the most beautiful? Can such questions be answered? Appraisal of beauty is a matter of personal taste, and only a subjective answer can be given. For my part I would postulate one general and melancholy opinion. Stamps have decreased in æsthetic merit steadily, progressively and universally, since in 1840 our first penny black in its dark majesty and dignity unadorned set a standard which has been approached in vain ever since. It is largely a question of process. Those early stamps, our penny blacks and reds and twopenny blues, were line-engraved, and fine works of art—equivalent, were we talking of pictures, to the works of the old masters—the designers and this printing process produced. Line-engraved were the noble first issues of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, bearing the Royal Crown and heraldic flowers, the early issues of Ceylon from which the Queen's head flashes like a jewel, the 1855 issue of New Zealand (accounted by some the fairest of all Victoria's stamps), the first stately swans of Western Australia, the Queen enthroned holding sceptre and orb of Victoria 1856, the translucent Queen's heads of Saint Vincent, cool and coloured like rare fruits and crowned by the glorious Pax et Justitia 5/-, and also the delightful embossed issues which have permanently glorified Gambia and Heligoland in the world of philately. Engraved also were the finest of the fine issues of the German States, the first Belgian designs of Leopold I, and the Sicilian stamps of 1859, bearing the head of Ferdinand II, engraved by T. Aloisio Juvara of Messina, and printed by F. Lao, at

Palermo, which I would venture to praise as the finest issue of stamps from the æsthetic point of view ever made on the Continent. To pick one's choice of beauty from all stamps is a child's game, like picking one's favourite poet. But were I put to it, and stood in a nursery corner until I had pronounced, I would emerge after some reflection to give my vote to the five-shilling stamp of New South Wales, issued in 1861, designed by E. H. Corbould, R.I., and engraved by Perkins Bacon, king of stamp printers. This portrait of the Queen, fashioned to resemble a coin or medallion, reaches surely the high-watermark of stamp beauty, in design, and execution. To think of it when we stick our plain and modest specimens of to-day upon our envelopes and parcels is to mourn a departed era of tranquil, thoughtful, unhurried beauty, to be reminded of snuff-boxes that were gems, of stained-glass windows that were magic, and of all that former stately charm and elegance and splendour which it is so hard to find or recapture in our present tube-shot generation.

To study a complete set of stamps of Great Britain, or of any Colony, such as Gambia or St. Helena or Ceylon, is surely to watch a steady decline in artistic merit. As the engraved process gives way to typography, lithography, and photogravure—the last the process used for English stamps since 1934—we seem to pass by inevitable steps from the National Gallery to the Academy of Burlington House. Modern stamps, like Academy pictures, have many merits, and do not, at any rate in England, fall below a certain pleasing standard; but the early masterpieces of the art seem to have died for ever with the years, a fact the more remarkable when we reflect that, whereas these masterpieces were made when stamps were originally only intended for use not for collection, they no longer appear when they

are now issued in many avaricious countries as much for collection as for use. The majority of stamps produced to-day are of the 'pretty-pretty' type. They have their charm, especially for children, but like sweetmeats their charm is more for children than for elders, and that is not a satisfactory condition. No doubt now that the number of stamps required in our daily busier world has increased out of all proportion to the original demand much has to be conceded to economy and speed in production. Yet one cannot but hope that a time will come when the world is able to spend more thought and money on creation than on destruction, and when it will be possible to produce once more stamps that can look their ancestors in the face without humility or shame.

From truth and beauty to falsity and squalor. A word on forgeries; that bane and nightmare of philately, that Sir Lancelot of stamp Chivalry. The terror of forgeries, it is good to report, has very greatly diminished. The early period of collecting was the forger's heyday, and to look through schoolboy albums of Victorian date is frequently to shudder at the number of fungi which lurk among the mushrooms. To-day first-class dealers, with their battery of scientific instruments, are the best and surest defence against clients being duped. In early days a customer was often afraid to buy a stamp lest he should be spending his money on waste-paper: to-day if he buys from a good firm he is far safer than if he buys from or exchanges with an amateur friend, innocent but unknowing. For to detect a clever forgery professional skill is usually required. In the first place an intimate acquaintance with a genuine copy of the stamp is required, which acquaintance in the case of rarities—and it is only rarities or comparative rarities which are worth forging—the professional is more likely to have

than the amateur ; and even when the genuine stamp is well known, the tricks of the forger are often far from easy to detect. Greater dangers, however, are to be feared from fakes than forgeries. A forged stamp is a fraudulent imitation of a genuine one ; it is hard to perfect, and as a rule is fairly easily detected, especially by an expert. A fake is a genuine stamp which has been fraudulently tampered with so as to increase its value : the colour, perforation, or surcharge has been altered, the gum replaced, defective margins repaired, or postmarks or ink-stains removed. Even the professional is often hard put to it to unmask this knavery. Stamps which have been cleaned, that is, have had ink or cancellation-marks removed by chemicals, are fairly easy to recognize as the chemical usually removes some of the original colour and leaves the stamp with a suspiciously oily surface. A common faking trick is to remove from old Colonial issues the pen marks which denote that the stamp was only fiscally and not postally used.

A famous large-scale forgery directed against the Post Office took place in 1872 when at the London Stock Exchange office thousands of Victorian shilling stamps were forged and were successfully used on telegrams. The fraud was only discovered twenty-six years later, by Mr. Charles Nissen, the famous expert on British stamps, whose suspicions were aroused on looking through a number of these shillings in a collection. It was too late to unearth the culprits, and had it not been for the preservation of the stamps in this way by a collector the forgery would never have been revealed. Stamp-collecting has therefore its potential dangers for knaves even though they have escaped the sharp official eye of the Post Office.

A notable fraud directed against collectors was the series of stamps of Brunei, North Borneo, which were sold in some quantities to dealers by an enterprising and inventive

European living in the State, in spite of the fact that at the time the State possessed no postal service !

Famous forgeries, by an irony of taste, have gradually achieved a certain status in the stamp world, and specimens of well-known forgeries are prized by some collectors. A Gilbertian controversy broke out not long ago at Liverpool, when a collector brought a charge against a dealer for selling him a genuine stamp instead of the rare forgery for which he had paid a high price.

There are many stamp curiosities apart from forgeries. Considering the vast number of pictorial stamps which have been issued, it is a tribute to those concerned in producing them that so very few errors exist. It is a speck on the sun to remark that in the 1907 issue of Sierra Leone the hind legs of the elephant bend backwards, a feat impossible for that animal except on a stamp ; that the seal on the early imperforate Newfoundland five cents has fore-legs instead of flippers, and that on the St. Kitts-Nevis stamps of 1903 Christopher Columbus, who died in 1506, is peering anachronistically through a telescope. Colour errors have occurred fairly often. The most famous perhaps is that of the Woodblock Cape Triangulars. In January 1860 the Cape authorities ordered a fresh supply of stamps from England. These were duly executed by Messrs. Perkins Bacon and despatched. During their passage to South Africa, the bill of lading sent by the Crown Agents unfortunately got lost, and a Cape official, unable to receive the stamps without the bill, ordered the parcels to be stored in a warehouse where they lay forgotten for nearly a year. Meanwhile the Cape supply of stamps had run low, so the authorities commissioned their local printers to step into the breach. These printers produced a supply of those rough triangulars now known as 'Woodblocks' (because the

printing plates were mounted on wooden blocks), but in their haste, or perhaps their confused exaltation at the honourable task confided to them, they managed to insert a stereo of the penny stamp into the fourpenny plate, and a fourpenny stereo into the penny plate. Consequently every penny sheet contained a fourpenny stamp printed in red, and every fourpenny sheet contained a penny stamp printed in blue. These Cape 'errors' are now worth from £175 to £850 each.

A human history attaches to the Connell five-cent stamp of New Brunswick. The Honourable Charles Connell was Postmaster-General of New Brunswick in 1860 when it was decided to change the currency of the colony from shillings and pence to dollars and cents. New stamps were necessary, and the Postmaster-General commissioned the American Bank Note Company of New York to manufacture them according to his instructions. When the stamps appeared, to the great indignation of the loyal colonists—like the Pirates of Penzance, 'with all their faults they loved their Queen'—it was discovered that, while thirty thousand of the ten-cent stamps ordered bore the effigy of Victoria, fifty thousand of the five-cent stamps ordered bore the proud and complacent head of the Honourable Charles Connell. The Lieutenant-Governor in monarchical consternation refused to approve the design, and the discomfited Postmaster-General was forced to resign his office. A wit of the Colony celebrated the incident in the following lyric :

*Ye Connelle is a famous stampe,
Or ought to be, I'm sure,
Since it gained a notorietie
That's likelie to endure
Longer than manye' kyndes of fame—
Such baubles oft are but a name.*

*For this the brave designer payed
Six hundred pounds a yeare,
Or rather lost his salarie—
Which means ye same, I feare ;
Six hundred pounds to see his fayce
Posting around from place to place.*

This consolation Fate, however, has ceded to the Postmaster, that, if in the celestial regions he is still interested in philately, he has the satisfaction of knowing that if anyone to-day wants to buy one of those loyal ten-cent stamps Queen-headed he has only to pay one-and-threepence, while if he wants to secure the bullet-headed face of the Honourable Charles Connell on the five-cent specimen, he must pay over a hundred pounds.

Annoyance is said to have been caused to Queen Victoria by the inscription of the head of General Baden-Powell on the threepenny stamp issued in Mafeking during the siege, but this bears no relation to the immodest venture of Connell : the Baden-Powell stamp was designed by Captain Greener as a tribute, no doubt, to Baden-Powell : one can hardly imagine the General himself at such a time having either the leisure or the inclination for egotistical stamp designing.

Although a hackneyed phenomenon among the instructed, the Death-Mask stamp of Serbia has surely first claim for dramatic interest among stamp curios. This stamp, bearing the dual heads of Karageorge and Peter I, was issued in 1904 as a coronation-commemorative series on the centenary of the Karageorgevich dynasty. The issue thus appeared only a year after the ferocious assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga who were murdered in their palace in Belgrade by military conspirators in the early morning of June 11. The new stamps bore the heads of King Peter, the murdered king's successor, and that of his ancestor Karageorge. When

the stamps are reversed, the two heads combine to make a third head—the ghastly death-mask of King Alexander, mutilated and grinning. The aged and highly respectable engraver of the stamps, Monsieur E. Mouchon, indignantly denied any intention of having perpetrated consciously this grim memorial. If Monsieur Mouchon is to be believed, philately, like other branches of life, proves that truth can be more strange than fiction, and that there evidently exists a divinity which shapes our stamps, engrave them how we will.

Three curiosities, less grisly, among English stamps may be mentioned. Most interesting perhaps of all essays, i.e. designs proposed but not adopted, are the penny red and black essays prepared in 1841 bearing the blameless features of the Prince Consort. Queen Victoria, it need hardly be said, was highly in favour of these essays on personal grounds, but they were not issued owing to the objection to having any head other than that of a reigning sovereign on English stamps. One cannot but feel that Mr. Lawrence Housman missed an opportunity of adding a charming dramatic cameo to his series, depicting the royal uxorious debate on this delicate philatelic problem.

Another remarkable set of English stamps of three values was the Puffin issue of Lundy Island, made for Mr. Martin Coles Harman who purchased that island. The stamps were printed in London by Messrs. Bradbury Wilkins. As monarch of the Island Mr. Harman had these stamps issued in November 1929, but modestly preferred that they should reveal the faces of those innocent puffins who shared the island with him rather than his own features. The authorities stepped in, however, and the stamps were only allowed to be sold as souvenirs to tourists, a humiliation and cause of chagrin no doubt to the puffins.

Lastly, as late as last year, a strange specimen appeared among us, known as the poached-egg stamp. Officials of our Post Office were provided with imitation stamps bearing a green egg-like inscription, which they were instructed to insert into stamp-machines in various out-of-the-way parts of the country to test whether the machines were in working order. The officials by mistake left some of these imitations in the machines, which were extracted from them by surprised yokels in return for their pennies. Thinking that the authorities had developed a curiously new idea of stamp designing, the yokels posted their letters, and having reviewed the circumstances of the case, the authorities ruled that such letters as had been thus posted in good faith must be passed. The stamp was, however, promptly disowned after this, and having purchased an unused copy for sixpence in London, I lost a penny at Wimbledon by endeavouring to pass an envelope through the post by it, which I addressed and posted to myself. The stamp, so far as I am concerned therefore, might be more appropriately named the 'bad-egg' stamp.

Having thus moved to a climax by publicly confessing my poached-egg sin, I now end my observations on Philately, this strange phenomenon; and whether anything I have written causes anyone hitherto uninitiated to understand any better than before the fascination of the hobby is for my readers and not me to know. To those still mystified, I would say this: anyone has a right to maintain that Wordsworth's religion of Nature means nothing to him: the stock-broker, with no taste for mystery, is fully free to laugh at a faith in flowers, a belief in mountains, and at a soul moved to jocundity by daffodils and to thoughts too deep for tears by the primrose and the daisy: but what he must not say, if he has any regard for truth, is that Wordsworth did not

believe, and believe with absolute sincerity, in these things ; and, anyway, as Jane Austen remarked, one half of the world will never understand the pleasures of the other half. So, say of philatelists, if you like, that they are mad, that they are misguided, deluded, extravagant and absurd eccentrics : but do not say that they are hypocrites : do not deny them the sincerity of their fanatic pleasure, the genuineness of their crazy joy.

When Alice woke from her dream, the pack of cards showered down on her, and she knew them for what they were. Perhaps the Shavian day will one day come when all men will be rational, when all toys will be broken, all games despised, all illusions and whims and caprices dispelled, all enthusiasm drowned in a frigid, intellectual universe : then no doubt upon the mugs and millionaires their stamps will shower down too, exposing themselves for all they really are—worthless and useless scraps of brittle paper ; and the mugs and millionaires will wake up from dreaming and realise what fools they have been. But, awakened from their folly, will they be so happy as they were before ? Personally I would rather live in a paradise of fools than in no paradise at all. The paradise of stamp-collecting may be, I grant, a foolish and a childish one, but as Sir William Temple wrote nearly three hundred years ago : ‘When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.’

THE OLD DOMINION.

BY LUCILE BRAKENRIDGE TILL.

VIRGINIA, the Old Dominion State, holds with strong ties the unswerving love and loyalty of her sons and daughters even down to the fourth and fifth generations. It is a proud claim to boast of being a native-born Virginian: but descendants of early settlers are equally proud of their Virginia ancestry and feel a deep and abiding affection for the Old Dominion. Here is a story clearly illustrative of this emotion: A very old lady who lived out in Kentucky, who had never in her life been inside the boundaries of Virginia, and whose forefathers had emigrated westward through the Wilderness Trail from Virginia more than a hundred years ago, nevertheless always referred to the state as 'back home in Virginia.' She spoke for many of us, for we whose ancestors were Cavaliers truly regard Virginia as our 'home.'

The old 'darker' song indicates that this strong bond is felt by black as well as white Virginians. As the touching words with the plaintive tune echo over the radio many listeners from the forty-seven other states feel the urge to go back home, and sing vocally or in spirit:

*'Carry me back to old Virginny,
There's where the cotton and the corn and 'taters grow,
There's where the birds warble sweet in the spring-time,
There's where this old darker's heart am longed to go.
There's where I laboured so hard for old Massa,
Day after day in the field of yeller corn.
No place on earth do I love more sincerely
Than Old Virginny, the state where I was born.'*

The first English settlement in North America was at Jamestown, and, although those colonists did not long remain, many others followed, and the coastal part of the present state was rapidly colonised by Englishman. It is interesting to conjecture what differences it might have made to both states had the *Mayflower* reached the coast of Virginia, its originally intended destination, instead of Massachusetts, its final destination.

The English influence is widely evident in both the people and place-names of Virginia. How delightfully English are some of the county names : Albemarle, Isle of Wight, Princess Anne, Prince George, Surrey, Sussex, King William, Warwick, York, New Kent, King and Queen ! The very name of the state was given to it by Sir Walter Raleigh in honour of Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen. The present white population is almost wholly original stock from the British Isles, this part of the United States not having been flooded with a tide of Southern Europeans, as has happened in some other parts of the country.

The oldest college in Virginia still holds dear its claim to royal grant. Every year the catalogues print the charter in its entirety and give the complete history of the college's founding and development.

'The College of William and Mary in Virginia is the outward and visible sign of the power of an ideal. When the first permanent settlement of the English race was made at Jamestown on May 13, 1607, the germ of this College was already in being, for these hardy adventurers were by their nature compelled to keep and foster life and education in the fulness in which they had known them in England. . . .

'Through privation and prosperity, under the crown as under the commonwealth, the Old Dominion held to its plan for a place of adequate instruction, and in 1693 a royal charter was granted by Their Majesties, William and Mary,

to a college to be called by their names. This college, the first in America to receive its charter from the crown under the seal of the privy council and the first and only American college to receive a coat-of-arms from the College of Heralds, began its notable career in 1694, when temporary buildings were opened for use. . . .

'The same courage and persistence which enabled Commissary James Blair, the representative of the Bishop of London in Virginia, to obtain this charter led him to secure Sir Christopher Wren, the genius of St. Paul's Cathedral, to design the buildings for this infant undertaking.'

The charter of the College of William and Mary in Virginia, dated February 8, 1693, begins with these beautifully impressive words :

'William and Mary, by the grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King and Queen, defenders of the faith. . . . To all to whom these our present letters shall come, greeting.'

Among the trustees, including many prominent and aristocratic men, I find the name of William Byrd, first American ancestor of Admiral Richard Byrd and Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia. Among numerous stipulations and provisions in the charter is a demand that the college's name shall never be changed :

'And further we will, and for us, our heirs and successors, by these presents do GRANT that when the said college shall be so erected, made, founded and established, it shall be called and denominated forever, The College of William and Mary in Virginia.'

As impressively and emphatically as the charter begins so does it end :

'And further it is our pleasure that such confirmations and ratifications of the premises shall be granted from time to time by us, our heirs and successors, to the said Francis

Nicholson, and to the rest of the trustees . . . and to their successors, and the president and masters or professors, of the said college, for the time being, upon their humble petition under the great seal of England. In testimony whereof, we have caused these letters to be made patent. Witness ourselves at Westminster, the eighth day of February in the fourth year of our reign. By writ of the Privy Seal. Pigott.'

I like to think that the spirits of the two Sovereigns still linger around William and Mary, a college that by its high standing scholastically, morally and socially has ever honoured and, we pray God, ever will honour its royal founders.

Williamsburg, the site of the College of William and Mary, has in the past several years been restored by John Rockefeller, jr., to its original state of colonial beauty. Just a few miles from Williamsburg stands Yorktown where, eighty-eight years after the college had been granted its royal charter, Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington. Far from the minds of these British rulers was the thought that in less than a century the land that they fondly called 'our Colony of Virginia' would be free and independent of the mother country.

Virginia was among the most active and aggressive of the thirteen colonies in advocating and fighting for American independence. The drafting of the Declaration of Independence was done by one of her native sons, Thomas Jefferson. The Commander-in-Chief of all of the American armies during the War for Independence was her most beloved son, George Washington. Both of these patriots later became presidents of the United States and because four others, James Monroe, James Madison, John Tyler and Woodrow Wilson, also became presidents, Virginia is often called the 'state of presidents.'

Noteworthy among other great Virginians were Abraham Lincoln, who, though born in Kentucky, was of Virginian

ancestry ; and Robert E. Lee, who, though considered the greatest military strategist of all time, is remembered and revered not for his skill in arms but for his noble, kindly character. 'Marse Robert,' as he was affectionately called by his negro friends, was, at the outbreak of the War between the States, offered the command of all of the Union forces. He refused the offer. Although strongly opposed to secession, when Virginia seceded he went with her, showing how strong is the tie by which the Old Dominion holds her sons.

George Rogers Clark went out from Virginia and conquered the vast north-west territory. Chief Justice John Marshall of Virginia was the brilliant interpreter of the Constitution of the United States, whose interpretations are still regarded by Constitutional authorities as adhering most closely to the letter and spirit of that document. At the present Senator Carter Glass of Lynchburg and Senator Harry Byrd, former Governor of Virginia, fight untiringly and uncompromisingly not only for the rights and liberties of Virginia but for those of the nation.

The national shrine of America is in Virginia. Every year thousands of visitors journey to Mount Vernon. It is with emotions of awe, love and reverence that one walks through the lovely old mansion, about the spacious grounds, and down to the beautiful spot overlooking the Potomac where is located the tomb in which lie the bodies of the Father of his Country and Martha Washington. During the War of 1812 the British, on the way to attempt the capture of Washington, D.C., dipped their flags and fired a salute at the site of the tomb, and this custom is still observed by all ships of all nations as they pass Mount Vernon.

Another shrine, second only to Mount Vernon, is Montecello, the home of Thomas Jefferson. From the porch of this colonial home overlooking the town of Charlottesville

Jefferson watched through field glasses the construction of the buildings that he had designed for the University that he had founded. The campus—known as lawns—the buildings—architectural gems—are considered the most beautiful in the world. What glamour in the very name—University of Virginia !

From the time that my son was a baby it was the dream and ambition of my life to send him to Virginia. That dream has come true and I thrill with joy at the realisation that in one more year he can say : ' I am a graduate of the University of Virginia.'

With pride and gratitude may a man claim that distinction. His degree stands not merely for certain credits earned, but also for the contact that he has had over a period of four years with an institution of high scholastic standing, an effectively working honour system, and a faculty unsurpassed in culture, character and education. With enthusiasm and loyal college spirit students and alumni sing :

VIRGINIA, HAIL, ALL HAIL.

*Ten thousand voices sing thy acclaim ;
Ten thousand hearts beat high at thy name ;
All unafraid and girded with good,
Mother of men a Queen thou hast stood ;
Children of thine, a true brotherhood—
Virginia, Hail, All Hail.*

Not only do our sons ' go back ' to Virginia colleges, At beautiful Lynchburg on the James River stands Randolph-Macon Woman's College, where our daughters sing :

GOD BLESS YOU, RANDOLPH-MAGON.

*Oh, dear old Alma Mater, how majestic now you stand,
You're a credit to Virginia, and a blessing to the land ;
May your glory never lessen, may your children e'er be true,
God bless you, Randolph-Macon ! Here's a student's love for you.*

Across the Blue Ridge in the famous Valley of Virginia is the old, interesting and romantic town of Lexington, named in honour of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Here are situated Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University, the latter, of course, named for George Washington and Robert E. Lee, both outstanding colleges of America.

Yes, we send our sons and daughters 'back home' to school, for Virginia claims her own through the deep love and loyalty that the Old Dominion inspires in her children.

Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.

DUST.

*My questing fancy, wandering far and wide,
Found dust was everywhere ; in grimy rooms
Where cobweb curtains hung from side to side ;
In city streets ; on ancient mouldering tombs ;
And yet far different dust I found on earth
While seeking where the hazel catkins swing,
Not dust of death, but pollen dust of birth,
When Spring with surging life fills everything.
Then Summer brings bright jewel dust to inlay
The gorgeous wings of butterflies ; and night
Brings star-dust scattered on the Milky Way ;
And Winter sifts the snow all glistening white.
So dust, to me, all quaint and various seems,
And we ourselves are wrought of dust—and dreams.*

IRENE POULTON.

THE DEATH RINGS.

BY ROBERT M. MACDONALD.

I WAS riding along a bush track towards the Paroo River, in the south-west of Queensland, expecting to meet some friends at any time who were riding southwards. We had all been together in the far north, but I had been deputed by the rest to travel southwards to Brisbane by rail and steamer to attend to some joint business matters. They, having a desire to see the opal country of southern Queensland, were riding southwards and when my work had been accomplished in Brisbane I was to ride northerly until I met them. My necessary stay in the capital city had been shorter than had been expected and thus, knowing the route they would come, I was now riding northwards to join them. I had left Charleville, a township on the railway famous for its artesian bore and wool, only that morning and, as it was getting on for sunset, was thinking about camping for the night. I did not expect to see my friends for a day or two and in any case there was no hurry.

Careless and free I rode on slowly when, happening to glance ahead, I saw a man running in 'jig-jog' style towards me. He was an old man and, his eyes being fixed on the ground as he ran, did not see me until just before we met and then his surprise at meeting a human being in the heart of the bush was a great deal more evident than was mine.

'Good day, mister,' he greeted, as we both came to a halt. 'Are you real?'

'Good day,' I responded. 'I think I am real. At least

I feel hungry and a bit thirsty. Why do you ask such a question ?'

'How far is it to the nearest township ?'

'About forty miles to Charleville, but you can hit Adavale in thirty miles if you swing to the right.'

The man thought for a moment : 'Will you be camping soon ?' he asked abruptly.

'I suppose so ; it's near sunset and I'm not in a hurry.'

'Well, I am, mate,' the man said wearily, 'and I don't think I can hold out long enough to get into any township. Anyhow, good night——' The speaker started off again, but stopped when I called after him.

'What's wrong with you ? Surely you're not in such a hurry as all that ? You're winded too and played out. Camp here with me for the night. I've got plenty of rations with me and you'll be the better of a good feed.'

'Thanks, mate,' the man answered resignedly. 'I reckon I may as well peg out here alongside you as in a township. I've been ringed twice, you know, and after I've got the third ringing my first sleep will be my last, and I was trying to get away from that third time——' The man reeled as he spoke and I slid from the saddle and half carried him a few yards off the track. 'It aint no use, mate,' he muttered. 'Keep me awake while I speak and after it if you can. Here take this. I think I've got a sister down in Sydney. No, I don't know her name now, but mine is Brenton. Give this sack to her if she's above ground yet and if she's not keep it——'

'This is first-class opal,' I cried, in intense surprise, opening the sack which he had handed to me. It was a small sack made roughly from pieces of tent cotton and held about two pounds of rough opal which seemed to be pieces of blazing fire.

'You heard what I said all right, mate?' the man looked at me anxiously.

'Yes, old man, I heard you, but you are not going to die just yet. Never mind about the opal and your sister. Swallow some of this and tell me about yourself.'

Brenton gulped down a mouthful of the contents of my pocket flask and seemed to rally. I then sat down beside him.

'I'm running away anywhere, mate,' he began, sitting up on the sand, 'because I've been ringed twice and am trying to put off a third and last ringing as long as I can. Maybe you don't know what "ringing" is? You've heard of it before! I'll bet you don't believe what you heard? I didn't anyhow when I heard about the ring magic first. It's true all the same.'

'But the so-called Death Rings only affect aborigines,' I interrupted.

'Mate, the Death Rings affect all men who have ever lived among the natives whether they are black or white.' The old man spoke in impressive tones and leaned over to me as he uttered the words. 'The aborigines of Australia are the oldest people in the world,' he went on, 'and they have a knowledge of a lot of things white men don't understand. I reckon the "Rings of Death" is one of those things. When a fellow breaks any law of the tribe to which he belongs he is ringed once by a circle of human footprints being implanted round his sleeping place. That ring means that he has been found out and has to go and stand his trial. If he knows he has done something wrong he'll not likely see any sense in giving himself up, and he may wander on somewhere where he thinks he'll never be found. Poor fool! In that case maybe he'll get to the other end of Australia some day and maybe in time he'll forget all about

the rings or laugh at the idea of them. But one day he'll remember all right. That day may be long after but sure enough it will come wherever he is, and then he will find that he has been somehow ringed with two rings of human footprints. Those double rings tell him that he has been tried in his absence and found guilty and are a command to go back to where he came from and suffer the punishment. If he doesn't go back he knows he has been located and will certainly be ringed three times—and that is the last. He knows that after the *triple* rings have been placed round him his first sleep will be his last, and no matter where he goes the *three* rings will be round him one sunrise.'

'Well, why worry?' I asked. 'You have not been ringed three times yet. I don't believe in the rings, of course, but all the same I'll see that no native comes near you to-night. I have been a prospector in some wild places, you know, and awake instantly when anything in the way of danger comes near.'

'Yes-s, but if it isn't any living thing that makes the rings, mister; if they are put round a fellow by some magic of the kaditcha man?' (sorcerer).

'Nonsense, old man; if the rings are real they must be made by some real person. What wrong did you do to cause the rings to be sent after you?'

'Mister, I can't remember ever doing anything wrong in the eyes of the aborigines, but I must have done something. Anyhow I found a ring of footprints round me one morning about a year ago. I didn't know where to go back and I thought I could dodge the rings by running away from where I was at the time. I travelled down through Queensland and after a bit joined up with some white men who were working on a new opal field they had just discovered. That opal field was good while it lasted, but it played out last

month and after hanging on for a time all the men left. All but myself, that is. I was a mean skunk and never told them that I had sunk my shaft a couple of feet deeper and had struck another level of first-class opal, like that you have got in that sack in your hands. Maybe that lower level seam didn't run through the other claims though, and if it didn't I didn't play no low-down blackfellow trick with my mates. Anyhow, as I have said, they left, and only myself and some natives stuck round the old grounds. I dug out that opal you have now and I suppose there is more of the gemstones showing down in the tunnel at the bottom of my shaft now than ever was found on the best opal field of Queensland.'

'But you haven't mentioned anything about the rings, Mr. Brenton,' I reminded the old man as he paused, evidently exhausted. 'Here, take another mouthful of this and then we'll kindle a fire and boil the billy for tea.'

The stimulant had the required effect upon the old man and he continued. 'I laid bare a lot of opal, but being in no hurry did not dig out the gems from the wall as I went along, meaning to do that when I had exposed the whole seam. I changed my mind yesterday though—I think it was yesterday anyhow—for I felt so lonely that I thought I would go in to Charleville or somewhere and get some decent fellows to come out this way and be my mates. With that idea in my mind I worked most of last night down my shaft gouging out those opal stones and then, climbing up, buried my shovel, pick and windlass rope in the mullock (raised excavations) round the top of my shaft. After I had done that I thought of lying down for a bit of sleep before sunrise when I would start off, but I don't think I slept much. Anyhow, the first thing I saw when the sun did get up were *two* rings of footprints round my sleeping place. I knew what they meant so I started away at once without any breakfast

and have been jog-trotting ever since. I had the idea that if I could get into Charleville or somewhere I could be protected from a third ringing by white men like myself, but I feel now that nothing can save me from those three rings and that I may as well get them here with you as anywhere else.' Brenton concluded and looked at me like a child at its mother.

I found it difficult to say anything of a consoling nature, but I mumbled out the words: 'You are run down in health, old man, and a doctor will soon put you right. How far do you think you have come to-day?'

'I don't know exactly, mister, but the opal workings where my claim is are about half a mile west of this track where it crosses a dry creek that has two clumps of pandanus palms growing on its far-away bank. There is a waterhole in the creek just there and there ain't any other water along this track anywhere on this side of that.'

'About what time did you start off from camp this morning?' I asked thoughtfully.

'When the sun was about half an hour up the old sky, mister. You should take a look at those opal fields some time and tell your best pals about them. I'll never go back.'

'Oh, you'll forget about those *third* rings to-night and maybe go back with me to-morrow,' I said with a laugh, mentally estimating that my friend had covered approximately fifty miles that day. 'You get a fire kindled while I hobble my horse. You'll find all the things for tea on my saddle.'

As the sun went down behind the distant Cooper Ranges we partook of the simple meal we had prepared and I noticed with pleasure that my old friend was now much less perturbed in mind. 'I ain't really much afraid now,' he said after we had talked and smoked a considerable time,

but if anything should happen to me to-night I should like you and your mates to benefit by the opal in my old shaft——'

'Turn in and go to sleep, Mr. Brenton,' I laughed, interrupting him. 'If anything visible comes near you to-night, whether it is black or white or has two or more feet, I'll shoot it.'

Brenton shook his shaggy head and smiled sadly. 'You mean well at any rate,' he said, as he lay down on my blanket a little way off from the fire, 'but I feel it all through me that *three* circles of death rings will be round me by morning. Good night !'

The old man was asleep almost as soon as he lay down. I watched him for a time and then studied the stars, thinking meanwhile that Brenton had heard so much of Australian native magic at one time or another that he had come to believe in it. Of course, I reasoned, the Death Rings existed only in his imagination, but I had come across so many strange phenomena in my wanderings in other lands myself that were utterly beyond my understanding and had classed them all as 'imagination,' although my senses had insisted, sometimes, that they were not of that nature. Might not the 'rings' be a magic of that latter category? I smoked more than was good for me while keeping eye on the sleeping man and, finally, seeing that nothing had happened so far, stretched myself out to sleep also.

Several times during the night I awoke with a start and seized my rifle, but as I could see the old man sleeping peacefully near me I always laid it down with a laugh at myself for being so nervous and soon fell asleep again. I remember that one of those times, when the stars growing red in the heavens heralded the approach of dawn, I actually sat up and sensed danger as clearly as ever I had sensed it in savage lands. Evidently too Brenton had also been roused

by something at that time, for he was just settling down again in his blanket after having also been disturbed. My nerves seemed like jangling piano wires for a full minute and a cold sweat burst out all over me. I held my rifle in my hands and waited, but nothing happened and the turmoil in my being gradually subsided. When I was calm again I lay down and slept dreamlessly until the sun's first rays shone into my eyes. Jumping up I washed my face with a few drops of water from my waterbag and called out to the man beside me :

'Another day, Brenton ! and as nothing came here to ring you through the night I think you can now dismiss the rings from your mind. Get up and we'll make breakfast——'

Brenton did not answer and I ran over to his side and shook his shoulders. 'You wouldn't do for a prospector in New Guinea,' I cried laughingly. 'You ought to cultivate the habit of rising with the sun——' I paused and stared at a *triple* ring of footprints in the sand before my eyes and discordantly there sounded in my mind the voices of ten thousand devils shouting that Brenton would never answer me. Then, in an overwhelming torrent, full reason burst upon me—Brenton was dead ! He had been ringed three times—and the awful magic had got him !

My brain reeled, and sitting down on the sandy ground beside the inanimate body which had once been Brenton I was utterly engulfed in the mental sea of chaos which now swept over me. In that stormy mental ocean stars, dead men, comrades, opal and magic all swirled about purposelessly, and dimly through the turmoil the thought formed itself that I could not long sustain the fierce tempest within me and remain alive. In a frenzy I clutched blindly at my rifle and emptied its magazine into the air. I had no reason

for doing so that I can remember, but I found myself wondering why the echo was so long delayed. I wondered too when it came why there were more reports in the echo than shots originally fired. No—the echoing shots were not blurred in any way and surely it was strange that some kept on repeating themselves at odd intervals. Suddenly I was interested. The reports were not echoes at all ! I sprang to my feet and became conscious that the mental whirlpool inside my being had ceased and that I was myself again. Yes, Brenton was dead, but who had fired the shots which I had mistaken at first for echoes ? Hastily I slipped more cartridges into position and fired off another round of shots. Some birds—‘Happy Families,’ I think they were—flew up again to a branch of a tall bush tree whence they doubtless had flown down when my first shots had disturbed them, and, a moment or so later, a fusillade of revolver-shot sounds floated towards me on the still morning air. I ran over to the track and listened intently. Almost at once the sound of galloping hoofs came to my ears and then human voices hailed from somewhere, faintly but unmistakably. I shouted in response and, mingling with the echo of my own voice, came answering calls. Immediately after a horseman appeared down the track galloping furiously and I saw that he was hatless and coatless and riding bareback. In astonishment I watched his approach. There was something familiar about that rider that I could not at first comprehend, but I did so a few seconds later : ‘Here, Mac !’ I cried, and as Mac’s famous horse drew up beside me and its intrepid rider leapt from its saddleless back I almost fell into the arms of my old comrade.

‘What’s wrong ?’ he gasped. ‘My horse was handy and I came along right away when I heard your shots. All the others are coming on on foot.’

Silently I pointed to the body, and Mac knelt down and felt all over it. 'He's dead all right,' he said, standing up again. 'How came you here? We camped last night about a mile north of this place, but if we had guessed you were anywhere about we would have come on——'

Wolfram Dick, followed by Big Sam, Old Riddel and Sydney Charlie ran up as he was speaking, and I remember checking a laugh at their untidy appearances, recalling in time that they must have sprung from their beds and come on in answer to my first shots without any preparation.

We covered the dead man with scrub as a protection from crows and other flying creatures and in a few minutes were walking back to where my comrades had camped the previous evening. During the journey I told my story and heard theirs.

'Poor old Brenton!' Old Riddel commented, examining the opal the dead man had entrusted to my care. 'I have heard of him before somewhere and I don't believe he ever did anything a white man would call wrong in his life. The abs., though, have some secret magics of their own, and although most white men only laugh at them I am a bit inclined to think they are not all harmless.'

'That's all very well,' I argued, 'but Brenton was not an aboriginal and surely no blackfellow-magic could affect him?'

'The fear of those rings made him run faster than our horses could travel easily anyhow,' said Big Sam thoughtfully. 'We've been riding along over those tracks of his ever since crossing that big dry creek about fifty miles back, this morning.'

'Yes, he must have covered all that distance at a jog-trot,' I agreed. 'But, even supposing that the Death Rings do apply to a white man, Brenton didn't get a fair chance. He was running away to escape being ringed a *third* time, and

I understand that it only *after* a man actually has been ringed a third time that death comes in his first sleep ?’

‘I think that that little matter is easily explained,’ said Old Riddel. ‘Of course I don’t believe in the magical powers of the rings themselves. The old man was killed certainly, but it was by human agency. Probably he awoke while that human agency was making the rings but, like you, didn’t see anything and went to sleep again. That was really his first sleep after being ringed the *third* time, and true enough it was his last.’

No one else spoke but doubtless all thought a lot, and soon after we reached camp. We had breakfast there and when the horses had been collected—I had led my own on our journey to the camp—we rode back and reverently interred the man whom I had known as Brenton, cutting out his name on the stem of a tree and also the date of his death. Next day we rode back over my tracks into Charleville where I reported everything to the authorities and handed over Brenton’s opal and all the papers found on his person. While in that quaint sheep city of the far west we bought a buggy and tools in addition to stores, and one morning set out for the opal fields of which Brenton had told me.

The abandoned claims which we found extended through the bush over an area of about half a square mile, and some aborigines, consisting of two ancient grandparents, their sons and daughters with their families, and their sons-in-law, were camped on a creek which flowed (sometimes) past the outmost claim. Those natives interested me greatly. One of the younger men was a splendid specimen of aboriginal manhood who proudly told us his name was Hungry Billy. He was remarkably fleet of foot, and on learning from one of his relations that he hoped to be a ‘kaditcha man’ some day I was filled with strange wonderings.

But I had no time for useless thought just then. We were going in for serious opal-mining and each man in our party was expected to do his best to make our venture a success. Brenton had told me that all the claims except his own were worthless, but as all the claims looked alike on the surface of the ground we could not tell which had been his. Of course we had the knowledge that his tools were buried in his mullock dump, but as white dumps of decomposed clay or something of that nature were round the tops of all the shafts that knowledge didn't help us much. However, we set to work with pick and shovel and before sundown on the day of our arrival had proved that at least half a dozen of the claims did *not* include the one for which we were looking. That night we told the aborigines that we were hunting for one special claim and endeared ourselves to them by giving them some white man's tucker that we could not use ourselves. Probably with the idea of obtaining more food from us they scattered themselves over the dumps next morning in endeavour to aid us in our search and with sticks, hands and feet both men and gins scraped into them. They reminded us of hens on a dust-heap, and while Wolfram Dick was saying something to the patriarch of the family which I hope the old man did not understand, Hungry Billy uttered a yell and held up the end of a rope. We ran over to the dump on which he and a gin had been working and as I clambered up its side the dusky damsel emitted a shriek of delight and raked out a 'spider' (a wire candle-holder with a point for fastening it into the soft walls underneath), also laying bare the rest of the buried tools. A few minutes afterwards Big Sam and I were lowered down the shaft which the dump surrounded and crawling into the hole or tunnel which existed at the bottom almost at once were confronted by a fiery seam of opal which shot diagonally

through the soft clay walls of the cavern like lightning flashes in a summer sky. For nearly a minute we continued staring at the sparkling splendour before our eyes and then, recovering ourselves, hailed our comrades. They came down the shaft like monkeys and in awed silence viewed the gem-studded wall, until Sydney Charlie dug out some red and green pieces which quivered and scintillated in his hands in the candlelight as if alive. Wolfram Dick then broke the prolonged silence by gasping out the words: 'We've struck it!'

'Yes,' Old Riddel added, and his voice was husky. 'At last we have found the end of the rainbow!'

None of the others spoke. If they were like me they couldn't.

We climbed out of the shaft into scorching daylight and prepared to give the natives the greatest feed they had ever had in their lives, but I was not happy. We had struck opal all right, I mused, but so had poor Brenton—and he had died! Was the finding of the wonderful opal part of the magic which had killed him? I reasoned that although hitherto all of us had scoffed at the idea of magic, believing somehow that the many inexplicable circumstances we had run across at various times were capable of being explained had our knowledge been more complete, the magic of the Death Rings was an influence too near to be ignored in that way. Old Riddel had dismissed all thought of it by saying that, although I had seen nothing, human agency had been employed somehow. Was that possible? My eyes fell on Hungry Billy at that moment and walking away from the scene of cooking activities I accosted him.

'Did you know the man who worked that claim where you found the tools?' I asked.

'Oh, Hungry Billy know him allri'. He funny fellow.

He give me an' other dam niggers plenty 'baccy, but me no' know his name.'

'Do the blackfellows ever work the Ring magic around here?'

'My word! You bet they do. Rings mighty good magic. They often kill white men.'

'So I've heard, but don't you think that a blackfellow who can run as fast as a kangaroo could kill a man and get the Rings blamed for it. He could be far away the day before and as far from the dead man the day after?'

Hungry Billy shuddered: 'Me no' know any blackfellow no' affraid runalonga white fellow an' kill him,' he stuttered, evidently appalled at the thought, but as I surveyed his slim, lithe body I could not help thinking that he might not be afraid himself. However, I knew the Australian aboriginal mind fairly well and refrained from asking further questions relating to the rings, knowing that they would only excite his suspicions and that he would not tell me the truth. Giving him a cigarette I therefore asked him a few questions not bearing on anything particular and walked back to help Wolfram Dick, the cook.

In a few days we had become settled in our new camp and had also become proficient opal-gougers. The natives were useful in many ways, bringing in firewood, catching our horses when we wanted the animals, and in doing odd jobs about the camp. They were a helpless lot, but they had an implicit trust in the white man, and we took great pains not to disillusion them.

By the end of a week we had gouged out about forty ounces of clay-encrusted gem-stones worth, according to our estimation, at least twelve pounds an ounce, and Mac and I were sent off to Charleville to sell them to a gem-buyer who visited that township periodically. While riding along

the sandy track I knew so well we noticed that Brenton's jig-jogging foot impressions were still there, and as it was approaching sundown by the time we reached the place where I had met him, Mac proposed that we should camp in the same place for the night. I did not like the idea of camping near that never-to-be-forgotten spot, but I liked less the idea of being ridiculed by Mac and so had assented. Still, there were the rings around the place where Brenton had lain and over there was the mound under which he rested. I mastered my nerves with an effort of will and, as we boiled our billy, said to Mac :

'I am now almost convinced that Hungry Billy ringed Brenton.'

Mac looked up and laughed : 'Then your mind is not working as it should, old man. How could Hungry Billy come here and ring Brenton without being seen by you? Yes, I know you wouldn't know if you were sleeping at the time, but even if you were asleep that sixth sense that guards all sleeping wanderers would awake you if danger of any kind came near.'

'Well, that supposed sixth sense didn't work that time, Mac, and, after all, Brenton *was* ringed, whoever or whatever did the ringing. Oh, I don't believe in magic any more than you do, but how else can those rings be explained? See, they are there still as you all saw them. There has been no rain or wind since to destroy them.'

'No, there never is any kind of weather in this bit of Australia,' Mac grunted, walking over to the triple circles of footprints as he spoke. 'All the same those rings of footprints look very like those left by the runner whose tracks we have been following all day.'

'But those were Brenton's tracks,' I expostulated. 'He came fifty miles that day.'

'Yes; they must be his. I never heard of any nigger wearing boots or shoes.'

'No; aborigines have no use for them. Brenton and I wore them, of course.'

Mac grinned and shifted the billy to the side of the fire, "I suppose you didn't plant the rings round the old man yourself?" he said.

'Certainly not, Mac. What do you mean?'

'Only that I have the idea that your thinking machinery is a bit out of order at present. You see those rings were made by a fellow who wore boots and if you didn't make them they must have been made by the boots that carried the fellow who came along over that fifty-mile track——'

'But—but—Brenton made those tracks, Mac.'

'Yes, so you said before. Anyhow they were made by the same boots as made the rings as you can see. He made those tracks all right, old man, and he also *ringed himself in his sleep*. I expect he had heard of the Death Rings somewhere and auto-suggestion did the rest . . .'

We sold our opal in Charleville next evening.

'He

THE OLD FOREST.

BY G. PICKTHALL.

THIS stretch of woodland, one of the few remaining tracts of true primeval forest left to us in England, lies close to what has now become a busy arterial thoroughfare, and therefore, though strictly preserved by its present enlightened owners, one fears that the days of the old wood are numbered. It lies at the mercy of any cigarette-end of any casual motorist or 'hiker,' and sooner or later must inevitably be lost, like so many other things that can ill be spared, in this strangely ugly and destructive transition-time of ours.

Here oaks and hollies grow so close that often their trunks and branches are literally welded together, and dense masses of thicket open suddenly, almost magically, upon green glades sparkling with dew, where in its season may be found the small deep yellow cow-wheat, *Melampyrum sylvaticum*, a plant only found in the very oldest woodland.

In one of these fairy-like green lawns tradition places an early Christian church, of which no trace remains, save in an exceptionally dry season, when the faintest possible outline of foundations may be traced upon the burnt brown turf. Imagination pictures a hut somewhat like the first small wattled church of Glastonbury. But there is nowhere any account of how these missionaries fared amongst the proud fierce tribes of the Icenii. All have long since mouldered away, paying their debt to time and circumstance. Only the forest knows.

Dr. James, the late Provost of Eton, in his book entitled *Norfolk and Suffolk*, quotes Lord Francis Hervey to the effect

that here—in this East Anglian forest, and not as generally believed at Hoxne—the martyrdom of St. Edmund took place. It was here, in 870, that the King's standard-bearer witnessed his master's refusal either to bargain with Offa the Dane or to renounce his faith.

'He was evil-intreated,' that steadfast king, 'scourged, shot with arrows, and finally beheaded.' As darkness fell, the Danes drew off in triumph, and then the faithful standard-bearer, seeking his master's body, found under a great oak-tree the head of the King with a grey wolf guarding it.

That same oak might well be standing unto this day, one of these fabulously old stag-headed, skeleton trees, twisted into fantastic shapes, with strange growths upon them. It would be difficult to find their like in any other part of the country, for in most privately owned woodland, trees are cut down long before they can so run the full gamut of their age. But here in this primeval forest they are allowed to follow the course of nature, and are truly a most strange and weird spectacle. Stand and look at them for a while, and they will seem to move and twist and turn. A hooded head peers forth from one, and within its shadow there are certainly piercing eyes. Over there, at the bottom of a hollow blackened trunk, a beast crouches, tawny-coloured, the texture of its fur is plain to see, and inside another riven and blasted cavity stands a monstrous figure, arms outstretched and ending in twigs that are like clutching hands.

Even in broad daylight these old trees are eerie enough, but at nightfall, lit up by the faint greenish phosphorescence of rotten wood, they might shake the stoutest nerve.

There is a rough track through the forest leading to an adjoining village, but folk are shy of passing along this at night, for they are afraid of 'the wicked judge,' who could only have been one Sir Thomas de Weyland. This Sir

Thomas held several manors in East Suffolk, and in 1274 was Lord Chief Justice. Thirteen years later he was arrested for condoning a murder committed by his own servants, and delivered as a prisoner to the keeping of Sir Robert Malet. He escaped, but after some time was recaptured and given the choice of trial, captivity, or outlawry. He chose the last, and it is probably during this period that he found a temporary hiding-place in the old forest, where, to have left such a tradition behind, he must have fairly terrorised the souls of the few woodmen and peasants.

Sir Thomas then went abroad, and died in the odour of sanctity, for his heart was sent to the Franciscan Church of Sudbury. Nevertheless, his unquiet spirit seems to have returned to the old wood that sheltered him during those turbulent days. Besides this, there are more recent tales of hauntings. In the early eighteen hundreds, a keeper murdered his wife under circumstances of great brutality, and her shrieks are said always to be heard upon a certain night in October.

A friend of the writer happened to be on a walking-tour, and passed the wood upon this very night. He was appalled by the most terrible and agonising shrieks, seeming to come from the depths of its thickest part.

'Did you go to the rescue?' he was asked, for of course there was a possibility that the cries might have come from some flesh and blood person in real distress.

He answered shamefacedly :

'I have never ceased to reproach myself that in my cowardice I did not. But I had been told the story, and I am ashamed to say—well—I just took to my heels and ran !'

'*De te fabula*'—only a very exceptional being surely would have braved the black darkness and those horrible shrieks ?

Then there was a labourer, only a couple of years ago, who

burst into the nearest pub with every hair on end. He had to drive his tumbril through the wood, over the above-mentioned track, and there 'tew grät black Things had fared to run arter' him. Bad enough, but when he came to the gate and had to get down and open it, that must have been a horrid moment. No wonder that his old mare, terrified by the master's fright, 'rared wholly up on end and cut a proper dido'!

This may have been but a fantasy inspired by over-much beer, nevertheless the fact remains that, beautiful though it be, the forest is not a comfortable place, even in spring, when every glade spills over with a flood of bluebells. No cuckoo is to be heard there, and never any nightingales, although this is nightingale-country.

In summer, bracken crests reach nine feet high and over, haunted by buzzing, stinging hordes of flies, in this case attracted by the breath of corruption that steals from yonder oak. It is the keeper's Golgotha. Owls, white and brown, and even the lovely little Scops, all hang here, round eyes staring, glazed in death. Jays have already been robbed of their blue feathers to adorn some labourer's greasy old hat. Here are the beautiful fierce heads of sparrow-hawk and kestrel, long barred wings outstretched, never again to go soaring down the wind. Hedgehogs dangle in a row, prickly bodies grotesquely swollen, poor little pig-faces cheek by jowl with the enemy whose kith and kin they have so often slain, and then made a meal of, eating the long scaly body inch by inch. This viper is but a skeleton, skin and flesh clean gone, and showing the wonderful articulation of its ribs. But savage jaws still gape in the flat skull, with needle-sharp fangs that have long since lost their venom.

More genuine malefactors hang here also, rats, stoats and weasels, all crucified upon the keeper's tree, while underneath,

his so carefully guarded pheasants run and cluck, fattening upon the results of their decay who died that these might live.

Here, just where the forest thins, giving a distant glimpse of the adjoining fields, is a proof of Roman occupation sufficient in itself, without the additional testimony of a great camp-mound farther on, namely the *Ruscus*, knee-holly, or butcher's broom. The wooded hills about Lake Nemi in Italy are full of this plant, whose hard green stems provide, as its name signifies, such excellent skewers for meat. And, as in all places where Roman occupation can be proved, this plant is to be found, it is fairly evident that they brought it with them to England, as we might a sage-bush, or some other herbal treasure beloved of the cook.

In December its beautiful scarlet berries vie with those of the ancient holly-trees, alight to their topmost boughs. Never was such Christmas decoration as that to be found in this old forest. The wandering gipsies look and long—no more, for there are careful guardians on the watch, no holly may be cut here without special permission.

A touch of rime-frost makes of the whole an unforgettable picture in scarlet and silver, emerald-green mosses underfoot, and here and there gay banners, crimson and orange bramble-leaves flaunting it among the fox-red bracken, all intensified by the dark umber of the leafless oaks.

But it is above all at Martinmas that the spirit of the old wood is most keenly felt. Mary Tudor must have known it when, as a girl, she went a-hunting down these long green glades. Was she ever carefree, that poor driven soul? Did the thrill of a good run dissipate for one happy moment the cloud of 'darkness, blood-red' that seems to have overhung even her earliest youth? The forest knows.

Wisps of fog, blown up from the not-far-distant sea, drift

blue against the dark hollies, where crystal drops hang from every leaf, pattering to earth with a sound of stealthy footsteps. What comes? A fat buck stepping daintily, antlers held low, bright eyes turned every way in fear of the distant hunting-horn that rings out, wild and forlorn, upon the inward ear? Or maybe, one by one, the wolves are stealing from their dusky coverts.

Nothing. All these went down the ages long ago, with the great earls, knights, squires, burly abbots and their meinie, who thundered down these green rides, shouting Hallali! Only a stray pheasant, fearing guns, creeps with a faint rustle through the undergrowth. Far away a fox barks once, and is still, while in the hard clear sky the sun drops, a round red ball over the oaks, and swiftly closes down the 'brief November day.'

Stillness reigns, intensified rather than broken by the far-off rush of traffic on the road. Almost, through that ancient quiet can be heard the passing of the centuries. From the Stone Age until now, truly it is a far cry.

And in this old primeval forest it is not good to linger, for it holds a brooding mystery into which the soul may be drawn too far.

A DINKA FORENOON.

BY M. T. STEPHENS.

It all began with Mrs. Gray. Let me hasten to add for the benefit of the unsophisticated that Mrs. Gray is not a lovely itinerant American, all airscrew and allure, nor even that standby of the frontier school of novelists, 'the only woman in the station.' Mrs. Gray gave her name to an African antelope, one of the most graceful and beautiful in all the world. For many years it was Mrs. Gray's waterbuck, though it is not really a waterbuck at all, but of the *genus* *Lechwe* separated by some thousands of miles from the Red and Black *Lechwe* of the Zambesi. It is a rare and local outcrop found only in the immediate vicinity of the White Nile in the Equatorial Province of the Sudan, and it is much prized by sportsmen. This initiated a wise measure of preservation, for the Game Department—I think in the days when 'Brock' was King—laid it down that nobody was to shoot more than one in a lifetime. I have always regarded this as an extremely sensible arrangement in the case of a species which needs careful protection, but is not in danger of extinction. It ensures that no sportsman shoots any but a worthy specimen; and the bucks carrying the big horns are usually past their breeding best.

I had a permit for a Mrs. Gray; they are on the increase now and the restrictions as to one in a lifetime are occasionally relaxed. But this one I was combining with a Giant Eland, or, rather, I was trying so to do. I was hunting my Eland about 300 miles from the Nile, near Tonj, and

I had just three days to spare for Mrs. Gray, so there was no chance of my being able to go to Shambé, which is the recognised place for the big ones. But just north of Tonj there is an outcrop of lechwé, where the heads run up to thirty inches, and the D.C. arranged that I should go there. All of which rather long-winded introduction brings me to the Dinkas.

The Dinkas having lived in a decent obscurity for a great many years have recently begun to have a great deal of publicity. Mr. Osbert Sitwell discovered them in a charming essay, and Mr. Richard Wyndham followed it up with a novel ('Gentle Savage'), which is still a subject of somewhat heated discussion at Equatorial dinner tables. To the tributes they paid to these enchanting people I can add little. They are without exception the most fascinating African tribe I have ever met. They possess unique independence, amazing personal grace and beauty, and a sense of humour. They are one of the very few tribes in Africa who are still completely naked and unashamed. The men do not wear clothes of any sort, though they sometimes plaster the head with a sort of striated amalgam of mud, not unlike the heads of Edwardian footmen, and adopt for occasional ornament a sort of body belt of green beads. The women wear a girdle after they have borne their first child. They are unlike the women of other native tribes I have met. Theirs is neither the cowed retreat of the Asiatic nor the rather blatant humour of the ordinary African. They are indeed more feminine than the general run of native women. They will joke with you, and if you tease them too far they will drop their eyes and blush. And they are exceedingly good looking.

It so happened that on the day I was due to start, the chief of the particular Dinka tribe whose purlieus I meant to

visit had been summoned before the D.C. at Tonj for some irregularity or other. He was told that if a very large Mrs. Gray indeed was provided by him for my delectation he might possibly be restored to favour, and the light of the official countenance could shine on him once more. He departed, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against all lechwe, but I think the thing that pleased him most was returning on my lorry to his tribe. He was known to have departed under a cloud, but here he was returning with the *deus* on his *machina*. He was a tall, vigorous and splendid native, vexed only by the slight preoccupations of the host. (It would be awful if the hot-water bottle leaked into the Archbishop's bed.) Unfortunately, he knew no Arabic, but my servant, I found, had a little Dinka at his disposal, but of the quality which returns two or three different answers to every question, any of which might be right.

The Dinkas are a pastoral race. Cattle are the beginning and end of their existence. In a language of limited extent, there are some 500 words devoted to the description of cattle. For cattle are to the Dinkas of Tonj what fox-hunting is to Craven Lodge, and Jew-baiting to the Wilhelmstrasse. In the dry season they move to summer encampments near fresh grazing, and here they pass a life of simple and Arcadian simplicity. They never, or practically never, hunt. For instance, the roan I saw in Bongo or Jur country were by no means easy to approach. In Dinka country they were placid and untroubled as deer in Windsor Great Park.

We were well received at the encampment, and we camped just beyond it. There was no question of privacy. There was just the illimitable stretch of *toich*, broken here and there by palm trees. Wherever one went and whatever

one did one was thrown open to the public. The public responded. No amount of threats, entreaty, or cajolery could drive off the rag, tag and bob-tail of the village, who found me and my arrangements quite enchanting.

The chief sent for various minions. What was known of Mrs. Gray? Nobody seemed to take much interest. How different from the ordinary hunting tribes! With them, there is always the news of the father and mother of all antelopes round the corner. Somebody thought somebody else had seen some. 'Cross-examined,' as they say in the police-court news, somebody else had seen them a long way away several days ago. They were moving at a great pace in the opposite direction. He evidently had no desire to sign on for a hunt. I then said something to the chief about the D.C. The effect was electrical. He began an harangue; he put forth all the eloquence of a Palmerston preserving to Don Pacifico his bedstead, and at the end of it he announced to me that *that* man would show me a Mrs. Gray. He pointed at a pleasant young Dinka, highly amused at the whole proceeding, who, as far as I could see, had not been consulted.

Actually, within a mile of the encampment we came to the reedy banks of a river, with a good deal of muddy swamp and the usual great clumps of papyrus. We advanced into an increasing area of swamp, and there, not four hundred yards away, were thirty or forty Mrs. Gray, sunning themselves as happily as could be in the setting rays of the sun. By this time the chief had removed his nightgown—and, after all, which of us likes getting his nightgown wet?—and stood there, looking much less *opera bouffe* than he did in his clothes, and preening himself with satisfaction at the Dinka equivalent of good staff work. I made them all sit down, which they did in the state of beatitude engendered

by the prospect of meat, and then set out with the young guide to do my stalk. It was an easy one, and after a good deal of gesticulation as to what was or was not the biggest bull, I dropped one in his tracks. My Dinka broke into the amazed grin of a child who has seen a conjurer bring off a difficult trick. It must obviously have been a fluke. He pointed at another buck. 'Do it again,' he pleaded.

The bull was duly despatched back to camp. We picked our way gingerly through the swamp, and made our way home. For the next day we were promised a dance. And a dance there was in due course. These things are done in their own fashion by the Dinkas. It is no good looking for the well-drilled order of Mr. Cochran's Young Ladies, or even the regular decorum of a cotillon. First three or four of the village braves, in their ceremonial outfit of leopard-skin loin cloth and ostrich feathers and waist beads, ran round the camp, leaping and jumping. It was the invitation to the waltz. Gradually, about a dozen dancers appeared and a sort of orchestra, five or six men in the middle, with drums and sticks, and round them, leaping and gyrating, like blackcocks in display, went the performers. A very considerable crowd had collected to watch them. But the whole thing was haphazard and casual to a degree. I had promised a present of a bull for a really good dance, but I thought if this was the best that could be done, it would be a very puling calf indeed that I should give. And where were the maidens who were going to partner these braves?

However, as the crooning of the orchestra waxed longer, and the performers began to warm up, other braves appeared in dancing array, and, finally, half a dozen not particularly favoured Dinka ladies, no longer, as I judged, in their first youth. They stood in a nervous and giggling row like schoolgirls outside the class-room of a new drawing master.

But, in the end, they took the plunge and joined in the chain of dancers, in a movement whose nearest European relation was the Circassian Circle. Round they went in a low and rhythmic crouch, men one way and women the other, clapping with their hands to emphasise the rhythm. Then they stopped, and each took a partner in the manner of the Paul Jones, and really got down to it. Two in particular caught my fancy. They were throwing themselves into the dance with an *abandon* that betrayed something more than mere performance. The music had entered into them, and their beautiful bodies swayed this way and that in the spell of it. I had no eyes for the others, and they placed themselves opposite me. Soon most of the other performers had stopped to look, to say nothing of the orchestra.

The woman would turn from the man, arms raised to him behind her back, body thrust forward from the hips: he would fling out his arms and revolve on his toes behind her. Together they swung and swayed to the beat of the drums, till the sweat poured from their shining black bodies, and the ecstasy of the dance gripped them so that they could not stop.

'Are they lovers?' I asked through various interpreters.

Everybody had an answer to *that*, about half of them being emphatic 'Noes,' and the remainder being equally emphatic 'Ayes.'

At the end of it the distinguished visitor thanked the performers politely, and moved off with the chief. He led me past the confines of the village out on to the path which would take me to my lorry six miles away. He was loquacious and relieved. The visit had, undoubtedly, been a strain. And it had passed off without a hitch. The distinguished visitor had shot his Mrs. Gray, really quite a

nice head, with the utmost despatch, and had been extremely gracious about the arrangements. Doubtless, his favour with the D.C. would increase a hundredfold. And then behind us babel was let loose, babel and that pillar of cloud by day, which is the dust raised by many feet in a small space. The chief glanced back, glanced at me sideways, and continued to walk from the village with a studied nonchalance. But it was no good. Dinkas are just like children and they cannot hide their feelings. In a very few seconds it was too much for him; he whipped round and made off to see what it was all about. I followed.

There was, indeed, an extraordinary sight to greet us. The whole male population of the village was jammed into a seething mass of humanity, and was setting about each other with staves and sticks. The affair was, broadly speaking, two-sided, but those most actively engaged were striking at friend and foe with a fine impartiality. The combatants were arranged in two long lines, something after the manner of an eighteenth-century battle. Each line was about six or seven deep, so those at the back were not getting much of a show of the fighting. Round the outskirts were running a number of women: the younger ones distraught and tearful, looking for husbands and lovers: the elder ones, hardened viragos, urging their menfolk to further and further efforts. Others were seizing up small logs and boulders, and hurling them on to the heads of the opposite faction. I mounted on to the roof of one of the huts to get a better view. It was an amazing sight. Those of the combatants who were not in actual physical contact were taking the affair quite light-heartedly. But those in the first rows were past all control. They were hitting wildly at anybody and everybody. They were filled with the joy of battle. Several had nasty gashes on the head, one or

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two were limping away. It was only a matter of time before somebody was killed. From time to time I got a glimpse of the chief in the middle of the tumult, now trying to separate the combatants, now joining in and laying freely about him. Perhaps he was trying to settle a few old scores. Down below me were a couple of good-looking girls holding down one of the young warriors. They had crept in and dragged their man from the fight, and I could see others trying to do the same. This young Dinka was writhing on the ground in excitement like an epileptic.

The battle, meanwhile, had been going on for nearly fifteen minutes. Front-row places were being vacated and re-filled, but the ardour of the combatants had not slackened. Something clearly had to be done. As soon as I saw how the land lay, I had sent for my shot-gun, and now it arrived. I fired two shots. For a moment the tumult entirely subsided and then broke out again. I fired four more. This time there was a definite cessation of hostilities. I jumped from the hut, rushed between the combatants shouting a mumbo-jumbo of my own, and, aided by the chief, tried to separate the contending parties. There was a certain amount of desultory fighting, and I saw the chief get a smack or two over the head, but it was the end. Within five minutes the village was as quiet as though the fight had never been. I asked the chief what it had all been about. He said 'a woman.'

It was not until weeks after that I heard the truth of the whole matter from the D.C. He assured me, in passing, that I had been very lucky to see a proper Dinka fight, as it most certainly did not come the way of every visiting sportsman. The story he told me was this. The tribe in question had for a long time been separated into two bodies, as fiercely divided as Montague from Capulet. Montague's

son had purchased Capulet's daughter, and had paid down his cattle duly. The marriage took place and Romeo removed his Juliet. He then proceeded to commit every sort of enormity. ('He turned out to be a really terrible person. Of course, we ought to have enquired into his antecedents.' It might have been the voice of Cheltenham.) He enraged the entire range of his in-laws. His cattle were certainly all right, and, except in extreme cases, that would have been the only point at issue, but really this fellow had gone too far. Much too far. Almost—certainly, well almost certainly he could have his cattle back, and they would have their daughter. It was a terrible thing to have to do, but for the family pride they were prepared to make even this sacrifice.

Naturally the Montagues rallied their friends to them; so did the Capulets, for such is the habit of all village communities. A subject that had once been only the matter for tea-table gossip grew and grew till finally it passed through the Court of the Superior Chief and came before the D.C. himself. It was a very simple matter according to Dinka Law. He would have his cattle back and the woman would be returned to her parents. The matter would be ended. But they had reckoned without one factor. That was the human heart. Villain and blackguard though he might be, Juliet had completely fallen for Romeo. She loved him and she was not going to give him up. She pleaded piteously with the D.C., who was in a difficult position. He naturally sided with the girl: most people would in those circumstances. But he could not put European sentiment against tribal custom. She was led away vowing she would never leave her man, and he, possibly to be perverse, said he preferred his wife to his cattle.

While the story was being told I could hardly wait for its end. I felt I knew its history as I knew its characters.

'Were they the two that led the dance?' I asked.

The D.C. looked at me blankly. I explained.

'Well,' he replied, 'I should hardly think so. I don't see why they should be. After all, they all dance.'

But to me, the hero and heroine of that poignant little story will always be the Dinka warrior and his girl who danced for me that April day in the encampment near Wau Ahwel.

CRICKETS.

The night is star-slung, and immaculate

The moon rides low behind the foreign trees.

The crickets sing it; inarticulate

Man trembles at the beauty that he sees.

Trembles and strikes a chord but all in vain,

He cannot join in cricket melodies,

Nor chorus their refrain.

God gave to man the power to rise and walk

And think and build and fight with either hand;

Vouchsafed him lips to kiss with and to talk,

A Soul to nourish and the faith to stand

By all that he holds Holy; yet it seems

He cannot join the songs of cricket land

Nor dream with them great dreams.

PATRICK HORE-RUTHVEN.

Government House,

Ganeshkhind,

Bombay Presidency.

KHYBER COURTSHIP.

A TRUE TALE.

BY MAUD DIVER.

I.

IN his eyes, she was beautiful as the young moon above the hills in a clear sky. Other men also had eyes to see : for her beauty was of no common order. Height and grace are the natural dower of many young Afridi peasant women, who live healthy lives, free and unveiled ; but Miriam Jān possessed more than these ; more even than her straight nose and full resolute lips, her eyes blue as sapphires under brows curved like a raven's wing. To her, Allah had also given the spell that draws a man's gaze and fires his blood, so that he knows no rest till he has made her his own.

That spell, the oldest on earth, she had laid on young Mir¹ Ashgar, Afridi of Afridis : more than six feet of him, with sinews of steel, high nose and eagle eyes ; his short black hair curled upward under his peaked cap and turban. He wore, as yet, no beard ; but at one and twenty he was fully a man, proven in fight and in service as Border Khas-sadar—the irregular force of tribal levies who guard the Khyber caravans. There were raids also and feuds and secret gun-running ; and he had asked no better of life, till he beheld Miriam Jān tending her uncle's field, in her blue tunic and the scarlet trousers worn by women to ensure safety from the sniper's bullet. Swiftly the spell had worked in his heart—in his veins. He had watched and

¹ Meer.

waited to catch a smile from her eyes that seemed to answer the message in his own.

It was now full spring-time, season of mating and becoming, when the forces of life were quickened in man and beast, in field and orchard. Peach and almond blossoms laughed in the sun. Scanty crops came struggling up through the stony soil. Even in the terrific ravines of the Khyber, green blades appeared where some dropped seed had fallen. And there were other spring fervours in this region of trained warriors, born thieves and raiders. After the long hard winter, spring was the time for cattle lifting, rifle stealing and looting of Hindu villages over the Border. In spring also the tribes came down from their hills to reap the early harvest in Peshawar valley and sow the later crop.

Mir Ashgar himself preferred rifle or knife to the tame business of slicing cornstalks ; but the spell laid on him by Miriam Jān was more potent than any call to manly adventure. So this year April found him camping with a horde of tribal families in the Vale of Peshawar.

Day after day, in the strong sunlight, all worked together ; long lines of men and women, old and young, backs curved, sickles swinging to the rhythm of familiar phrases, calling on Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. And every morning Mir Ashgar managed to find himself reaping beside Miriam Jān. Every morning she would greet him with a side-long glance ; and her blue eyes gleaming through black lashes set the blood racing in his veins. By some means he must contrive a secret meeting to tell her of his love ; to discover who and where was her father, that he might seek him out and offer all he possessed for the winning of so fair a bride.

There came a night at last—a lover's night of full moon

and pale stars—when Mir Ashgar, no laggard in courtship, had contrived his secret meeting with Miriam Jān. While all the camp slept—unaware of their brazen behaviour—they two sat close together in the shade of a rock, looking out upon a world silvered with moonlight; locked in the stillness of intense emotion that is debarred from full expression. For although their meeting over-stepped Moslem etiquette, Mir Ashgar was true Pathan in his respect for the girl whom he desired as wife. Sitting so close that each could almost feel the stir of the other's heart, they spoke in low tones of their love, their hope for its fulfilment.

'My father,' she told him, 'is a Subadar in the Sirkar's Indian Army—the Frontier Rifles, now in Peshawar. He is a proud, hard man. He would expect much money; and he may want a higher connection.'

'But you—you—?' Mir Ashgar pressed her, a chill of dread at his heart, for his means were slender. 'Would you not plead that where your heart is given, your life may also be given?'

Her shoulder pressed against his own as she assured him, 'I would speak. But too well I know that when his will is set, his ears are sealed—'

'Surely not against the plea of a daughter so beautiful,' the man urged, pressing closer; but her woman's brain knew otherwise.

'For him, as for all fathers, a daughter's beauty is but a charm to extract more money from those who desire her in marriage.'

'To that desire and demand I am pledged, let him ask what he will.' Mir Ashgar's deep voice sounded like music in her ears; and she could feel the fire of his gaze, though their faces were but dimly visible to each other. 'I have

little enough money, but there are means to come by it, in Peshawar, for a man of craft and courage.'

'Peshawar?' she echoed, a tremor of fear in her voice. 'You would go to that City of a Thousand Sins?'

'Not to the City, but to Peshawar Cantonment, where the Sahibs and their police-*lôg* keep order. I will offer myself as a recruit in that Frontier Rifle Regiment. I will work to win the Subadar's good opinion; also to win or steal whatever price he may ask for so fair a jewel. By the favour of Allah, he must hear me. Then—*then* will I return, in the swiftest fire-car, to claim that jewel for my bride.'

And she answered very low, 'I will wait. I will pray. If only it could be!'

'It must—it *shall* be, Moon of my Delight.' His strong fingers closed like iron on hers. 'To the true Pathan, when his blood is fired, all things are possible—for hate or for love. That inner flame burns up every obstacle that hinders fulfilment of the desire.'

Lifted in hope by his brave words—by the belief that God himself could not deny their natural human craving—they clung together, whispering of one more secret encounter before the reaping ended. Then they must take up their burden of waiting and not knowing, till he should be free to return and claim his bride.

II.

Subadar Yakub Khan of the Frontier Rifles sat smoking on his low string bed with its scarlet lacquered legs and red cotton quilt, his bare feet turned up sideways, his knees falling wide apart. After the day's routine of early parade and orderly room, he was taking his ease in his own quarters that were baked to oven-heat by the noontide sun of Pesh-

awar ; a striking figure of a man, even in his 'undress' of white tunic and trousers. There was pride of race in the carriage of head and shoulders, the fierce features and cold blue eyes. There was cruelty in the high nose, in the curve of his nostrils. One could see whence Miriam Jān had gotten her beauty ; the man's strength and hardness tempered by the fact that she was a woman.

So thought Mir Ashgar, admitted by request to the presence of her formidable father, who had no suspicion of his intent. Nearly seven weeks, now, he had spent in the King Emperor's service. Though irked by discipline and routine, he liked the manly life of games and sports and mimic warfare, as a means to his own end. He had won the approval of his Jemadar and the sunburnt, laughing subaltern, who seemed almost as an elder brother to his men. For these young British officers, without damage to discipline, understood how to give and take a jest in good part.

Week after week he had saved fragments from his pay, had won more than ever he could save by bold yet shrewd betting at the station gymkhanas, by games of chance or skill in the men's quarters of an evening. In the Sudder Bazaar and in Peshawar City—when a man could get there—betting was rampant on kite-flying and on the favourite sport of fighting quails. Useless to speak of marriage till he could make a reasonable offer to the father of her who awaited his return. The mere thought of her stirred his blood as no bazaar woman could do. At the last gymkhana his bold betting had prospered. He had also won two good money prizes by skill in wrestling and putting the weight. So it seemed that Allah looked favourably on his heart's desire. In a bare seven months, he found himself lord of fifty rupees ; his treasure secretly buried in five bags that held ten apiece. Now surely he could speak without risk

of being spurned, even if more were demanded by the father of so much beauty.

But he had yet to learn the true nature of Subadar Yakub Khan ; proud as Satan, hard as the Khyber hills.

In silence he listened to the tale of this presumptuous youth, keeping the hookah mouth-piece between his lips ; and the low bubbling notes of water moving in the bowl had a friendly sound. Not so the harsh voice that barked out a refusal of Mir Ashgar's bold request, and offer.

' *Ishtāg farullah !* ' ¹ he bawled and spat in the dust, so near the young man's foot that instinctively Ashgar shifted ground. ' A fine fool *you* are to suppose that a Subadar of the Frontier Rifles would accept fifty rupees for so rare a beauty. I have other plans for a marriage better befitting my rank and position.'

' But it is I who have won her heart,' Mir Ashgar blurted out, caution forgotten in dire dismay.

' Aha ! This is a conqueror of women ! ' the harsh voice jeered, the cold eyes probed his own like points of steel. ' By what magic has the flame of your desire dissolved the veil of a young girl's modesty ? '

Alarm at the implication quickened Mir Ashgar's wits.

' The Subadar Sahib must know that a lover has means of reading the heart of a maiden, however modestly veiled. We reaped side by side, as did many others ; and also, like many others, we reaped more than stalks of barley and corn.'

Thus neatly he covered his slip of speech ; but the Subadar's final words were no kindlier than his first.

' A lover so bold and eagle-eyed must find means fitter to buy so fair a jewel than a barren fifty rupees.'

A gleam of hope lurked in that suggestion of finding fitter means, a hint that money might count for more than

¹ God forbid.

rank or position ; and Mir Ashgar drew himself up, squaring his shoulders.

‘By the favour of Allah, I *will* find the means required to win that pearl—your daughter. Then I will return and speak again of this matter.’

The Subadar barked out a scornful laugh.

‘You will need to win or steal a fortune, if you think to satisfy one who knows the full worth of his pearl. Princes—could they behold her—would offer a kingdom to possess her.’

And the young man answered, waxing bolder, ‘A woman desires no kingdom but the heart of her husband.’

‘Who spoke of *her* desire?’ came the sharp retort.

‘I spoke of it, because I know. And—inshallah !—I will not cease from offering all I possess, till I win leave to go and claim her.’

Saluting smartly, he stalked out into the glare of noon-day, a flame of hate scorching his heart. It irked him to hate the man who had begotten that peerless girl. But to be treated with open contempt, to be spat upon—virtually, if not actually—by his own Subadar, filled him with a consuming rage that would have led to murder in his own land where ‘a man was a man and a knife was a knife.’

Nothing now remained but to win or steal more money, and again more money ; then return and pester the scornful one, though he did not relish the thought of repeating to-day’s interview. But always the face of Miriam Jān haunted his mind, the pressure of her shoulder against him when she whispered, ‘I will wait. I will pray.’ If only to hear her voice once more, to feel the warmth of her body close to his own, he would ‘eat dirt’ again and yet again. For your true Pathan is a romantic lover. There is nothing he will not dare in order to win the beloved woman.

There were fewer gymkhanas now that the fierce heat

of the North was driving the white troops and their women to cooler regions. A good many of the last still remained, as he noted that evening, tramping on 'sentry go' outside the Club-house, where the Sahibs and their Mems and bold, laughing young girls came to make merry with dancing and drink and patting soft balls over a net. Such girls! Not only bare faces, but bare limbs, white arms and legs exposed for all to see. No wonder Sahibs, though very brave men, often used their woman with disrespect, so much temptation being offered them.

Here, in Peshawar Cantonment, the very air felt softer, tempered by the smell of damp earth and shaded by avenues of trees. Here all was order, comfort and security, ringed by that wide hedge of tangled wire, with gaps for gates, where police posts kept strict watch on all who came and went. From those fierce, empty-looking hills—an armoury of rifles and swords—none ever knew what sudden raid might come; and it pleased Mir Ashgar's pride of race to see how strictly the sentries must keep watch day and night; how all round the great wire hedge at dusk, a ring of powerful electric lamps blazed out like a giant's necklace of many moons: their backs to the shadowy mass of trees and buildings, their streams of light flung outward, so that all attackers would be clearly seen.

The sun was setting now in a blood-red flare, as if some giant had lit a bonfire behind the ranges that cut across the conflagration—here with the curve of a scimitar, there with peaks like brandished knives. Over by the Fort, spidery masts and wires of a new marvel called 'Radio Station' made queer patterns on the sky, above dark tree-tops.

At dusk, the Club gardens grew quiet. The leaping ones that shouted numbers at each other across their nets, vanished into the bungalow or the verandahs, where they lounged

and laughed and called for 'drinks.' From within came brazen music that lured them to dance ; music that stirred his own blood and quickened his desire for her who was denied to him by a grasping father.

Thought of her set him devising fresh plans for adding to his store. To-morrow he would get out to the City with the help of a 'pass' from cantonments and a friendly *ekka* driver who gave him lifts in return for cheap tobacco or cigarettes. He would squander a few precious rupees on a fighting quail of his own. From bets on those pugnacious little birds there was good money to be reaped. He had not done ill at kite-flying, one of Peshawar's favourite sports. To-morrow he would try again with the big kite that had pleased his romantic eye, because it was shaped and coloured like a heart. Let him win another ten rupees, and he would worry the hard-faced Subadar yet again.

Returning to his quarters, he found Miriam's elder brother, Sultan Jān, who had come down to see his father, and had brought with him a folded scrap of paper, produced from the untidy rolls of his turban.

'For you,' he held it out to Mir Ashgar, 'a message written for her by some old crone who has learned the art of scrawling on paper.'

'An art that has its uses,' Mir Ashgar grinned and clutched his treasure. 'I have already spoken to your honoured father. His countenance is not favourable. Only money will prevail.'

Sultan Jān emitted an expressive grunt. 'You will need a fortune and the devil's own luck to win *his* consent.'

'Till I win it, I will give him no rest. To her I will send a sealed message by your hand. God's peace be upon you.'

'And on you,' the other answered gravely. 'I will come again in the morning.'

Mir Ashgar, left alone, unfolded his wisp of paper. It contained only two sentences scrawled in Pushtu ; but they sufficed.

'I am waiting and praying daily,' he read, 'for word of my lord's return. May Allah cast his cloak around you to protect you.'

And he sent answer in the glow of his rising confidence : 'By the favour of Allah, money increases. I come soon to claim my bride.'

That night he slept in deep content, not knowing that he was fated to come sooner than he dreamed, and in a fashion other than he could have believed.

Next evening found him, for a few free hours, in Peshawar City, at the time of soaring kites and carrier pigeons—thousands of them let loose into the glowing sky like flakes of silver and mother of pearl. From streets and flat rooftops the kites were soaring, all shapes and colours, orange and purple and green ; his own blood-red heart rising higher and higher, tugging as if it would escape from bondage. Men around him were betting freely on the beautiful thing ; and he had laid money on it himself, convinced that it would soon outsoar the rest. His fancy, quickened by love, saw it as his own victorious heart, rivalled only by a green box-shaped kite that pressed closer and closer to it, blown by the wind, till their strings became entangled.

Suddenly, with a fear and dismay, he felt the taut string in his hand slacken. Far up aloft it wavered and came curling down to earth. And there was his heart blown aimlessly sideways, its clumsy green rival acclaimed as winner with a storm of cheers from those who had won their bets.

Mir Ashgar sat there stunned and bewildered, wondering

what envious devil of the air could have slit his new kite-string, till he was roused to anger by a short laugh that smacked of derision.

It came from a kiteless one sitting near him ; and he glared at the offender, asking roughly : ' What jest tickles your foolish mind ? '

The fool, having lost neither money nor kite, good-humouredly wagged his head.

' *Wah, wah*, brother, ask him of the green box. It is an old trick that serves well, if skilfully used.'

' What trick could sever good string high up in the air ? ' demanded the irate Pathan. ' I am from the Khyber, ignorant of these City wiles.'

And the stranger told him how certain practised kite-flyers would smear their string with gum and broken glass ; how cunningly they would entangle it with those of rival kites, cut the string and rob the owner of victory. Then Mir Ashgar raged the more, seeing himself not only robbed but befooled. Could he only have found that ill-timed jester, he would have killed him gladly with his own hands. For that soaring kite had seemed to him a symbol of his own heart ; its victory a promise of success ; its defeat a threat that filled him with fatalistic foreboding.

Slowly he rose, as if a weight hung on his limbs, resolved at least to find his treasure, having noted which way it had been blown by the wind.

Not that day, but several days later, he found it, all dusty and torn, salvaged by an urchin, to whom he paid *baksheesh* for it, though it would win no money for him any more.

From that day many other things went amiss. His good little fighting quail fell sick and he overpaid a swindling Hindu to cure him. A slip, while wrestling, cost him a

money prize. Some accursed thief discovered and dug up one of his buried bags ; and the lost ten rupees must be earned or won all over again. But his fighting quail, recovered, more than paid for the cost of doctoring. By fair means and foul, the desperate lover regained his lost rupees, added another ten, and once more confronted the Subadar, whose face remained full of scorn. Even another twenty rupees, miraculously scraped together, wrought no change in his harsh denials ; so that Mir Ashgar, in despair, dreamed of a bold plan to desert from the regiment with his hoarded treasure and carry off Miriam Jān—a willing armful—by main force. Once they were married, she could not be wrested from him by any father in creation. But a sudden run of luck brought his total up to ninety rupees, a huge sum to his eyes ; and he decided to make one last attempt at winning her in orthodox fashion.

Fortified by his daring alternative he again asked admittance one evening to the Subadar's quarters, half expecting to be summarily turned away for his tiresome persistence. But almost at once he became aware of a change in the man's bearing.

He was greeted with a jocular tribute to his obstinacy, and the sly query, 'Are there already more rupees to offer ? Hast learnt the Sahibs' trick of conjuring them out of an old hat ?'

And Mir Ashgar answered stiffly, 'There is no trick, Subadar Sahib. Only by your hard refusals I am driven to try every expedient. Nor will I cease from my demand till I win the maiden, your daughter, who is more to me than a thousand rupees.'

At that a strange light gleamed in the Subadar's cold eyes.

'*Bismillah !* Then let this be the last of it. Truly she is worth more than a thousand rupees ; but you have worn

out my patience with your long crying after the girl. Bring me a hundred—and you may go to claim her, with my signed permission.'

The young Pathan stood there dumbfounded by so abrupt a change of front. Then, proudly, he drew himself up and spoke :

'To-morrow, by God's favour, I *will* bring you a hundred rupees,' he said and turned away, not perceiving how the Subadar looked after him, with that strange gleam in his eyes.

Straight Mir Ashgar sped to the Sudder Bazaar, bullied a pig of a Hindu *bunnia* into lending him the final ten rupees, at a high rate of interest that would probably never be paid. That night he dug up his precious hoard ; such a sum as he had never possessed in all his days. Next to women and his rifle the Pathan loves money beyond anything in life. Yet, when morning came, he handed over those precious notes as if they had been so many rolls of blank paper.

'Bah ! From a man so wealthy I should have asked more,' was Yakub Khan's only comment, as his fingers closed on them.

'I am *not* wealthy,' Mir Ashgar retorted, wishing suddenly that he could snatch back his treasure. 'I am parting with my all, to gain—my all.' His own fingers closed on the signed permission—his passport into paradise. 'I go at once, back to the good Khyber hills, and claim my bride.'

'Yes—go at once,' the Subadar echoed, and Ashgar stared a moment, puzzled at his change of tone.

Then he turned and went his way, no room in heart or mind for any thought but one—Miriam Jān—Miriam Jān——!

III.

And now, at last, he was fulfilling his promise given on that night of full moon and lover's ecstasy. He was setting the miles at naught in the fastest fire-car in which he could find a precarious seat. It was a rattle-trap affair, tyres patched and patched again, battered wings fluttering in the wind, hurled forward, and somehow held together by a dare-devil Sikh owner-driver, untroubled—in this Free Land—by regulations as to overloading.

To the tribesmen it was simply an exciting means of transit that whirled them through the Khyber fast enough to foil any sniper who might be lurking among the rocks in the hope of adding a corpse to the tale of a family blood feud. The Sikh, having secured their rupees, cared nothing for their chances of death on the road from the collapse of his car, that should, long since, have been promoted to the station scrap-heap. None were turned away who could pay for a seat—of sorts. Huge and shaggy tribesmen clambered on board at will, clustered anyhow on piles of luggage, or even on the mud-guards; laughed lustily and shouted broad jokes at one another as the car—dangerously lop-sided—rocked and rattled up dizzy heights, round hair-pin bends, and down again along the twisting road that zigzagged as if a streak of lightning had scarred the naked rock.

And always ahead of them towered the rampart of monstrous ridges gashed with fierce ravines, climbing to the clean cold line of the snows that girdled Kashmir. And always they were hurtled up or down in the teeth of the terrible Khyber wind, like no other wind on earth: a furious rush of air from the highlands of Asia. And below them, along the old Khyber road trailed the bi-weekly

caravan, also from Asia ; a jumble of men and animals, miles long, like a dislocated snake. To the returning tribesmen there was nothing sinister or daunting about the atmosphere of this harsh land. To them these were the hills of home. To Mir Ashgar—who found even the hurtling car too slow for his impatience—they were the entry to paradise.

Now at last the gorge widened, at last the car was climbing down from dizzy precipices to the open valley that offered space, for Afridi villages. More like forts than peasant dwellings, these were : the high mud walls, the corner watch-tower, where one man or another kept unceasing watch, a loaded rifle between his knees : the fields that offered stones for bread, the scanty crops that villagers tended at peril of their lives. Only the women in their scarlet trousers could work unmolested by friend or foe.

And here was his own village—journey's end ; the stony fields, the scanty second crops scarcely worth the risk of tending, and the one battered old apricot-tree that had been flowering bravely when he left, making a poor show of half-ripened fruit.

Eagerly, vainly he looked for a flash of scarlet trousers in the field of Yakub Khan. Stumbling out of the bus, clutching his bundle of luggage, he encountered her brother Sultan Jān.

From afar he waved his arm, and as he approached, they exchanged a formal greeting. Mir Ashgar, on fire with longing, blurted out the two words that ran like music in his head : '*Miriam Jān !* I come from the Subadar Sahib who made a favour of taking my all—a hundred rupees. I have leave to claim her now.'

'Yes,' the other answered unsmiling, 'you can claim her—now.'

'Take me to her, brother, I burn with impatience.'

'Come, then.'

Turning round he went on before Mir Ashgar into the rough strongly built house. No sign, in the living-room, of Miriam or her mother, to whom he would fain have offered a son's greeting.

In silence they passed on to a small outer room furnished only with a string bed and a gay cotton quilt that half covered the sleeping form of Miriam Jān. There she lay before his eyes, one lovely arm flung out, in a waxen stillness—asleep.

Quickly he stooped and touched her hand to arouse her. It was cold as any stone. And in a swift rush of anguish, a flash of fury, he knew that he looked not on sleep—but on death.

With a terrible hoarse cry he fell on his knees beside her, kissing her cold lips as if he would rekindle the spark of life by the fire of his own thwarted passion. Then, through the depths of his anguish there darted a flame of rage and hatred, the fiercest he had ever known.

From the awful stillness of her beauty, he looked across at Sultan Jān who stood just inside the doorway.

'He knew—that cruel one? He *knew*——?'

And her brother answered, half in pity, half in scorn, 'What else? You also might have known—had you not been blinded by the red mist of desire—that such a man would never accept a mere hundred rupees for a girl so beautiful and well-born—had she been alive.'

At that, Mir Ashgar sprang up from the couch of death and hurled at the absent Subadar a torrent of curses and abuses in harsh rumbling Pushtu.

'He will not long be alive—this thief and son of Satan. Let him burn in hell.'

At that threat, the son of Yakub Khan made a quick forward move. But Mir Ashgar was quicker.

Like a flash he darted through the doorway. Out of the cursed house and the empty field, he fled into his own savage country that matched the savage purpose in his heart.

And from that day he was no more seen.

Barely a month later, there was consternation in a certain Frontier Regiment at the mysterious murder of a Subadar. He had been found dead one morning stabbed in half a dozen places and cruelly disfigured ; nor could any trace of the murderer be discovered in the country round Peshawar. But his name was known to Sultan Jān, bound in honour to initiate a blood-feud, that would take payment over and over, in scores of harmless lives, for the deceit practised on Mir Ashgar and the brutal murder of Subadar Yakub Khan.

KING'S PAWN.

*The lists of life's arena
 Are set in wise array ;
 Rank against rank the serried lines
 Stand marshalled for the fray :
 Monarch and queen and baron,
 Bishop and mounted knight—
 But Church and State must stand and wait
 For a pawn to open fight.*

*Then sidelong ex-cathedra
 The mitred prelate slides,
 Athwart and aslant the chequered field
 Diagonally he glides :
 Threading a virtuous passage
 With prim and priestly gait,
 'Twixt casques and greaves his way he cleaves
 Episcopally sedate.*

*Nimbly over the sword-throng
 See ! the knight-errant pranks,
 On his erratic charger,
 The free-lance of the ranks :
 Heedless of pawn or pontiff
 The gay capricious horse
 In and out of the tangled rout
 Steers his equestrian course.*

*Foursquare to every onset
The sturdy duke stands fast,
Sequestered in his castle,
Defensive to the last :
Until with shaft presumptuous,
Roused from his darksome lair,
With awesome wrath he sallies forth,
And fell baronial blare.*

*Superbly into the conflict
Sweeps with right regal mien,
Now forwards and now sideways
Her majesty the queen :
She sways the tide of battle
Whether from far or near :
The dual rôle in her control
Of prelate and of peer.*

*With neither crown nor mitre,
Proud plume nor helmet gay,
Fare I, a simple soldier,
Forthright into the fray :
I seek not sceptre nor crozier,
Title nor rank nor fame :
Ne'er looking back I lead the attack,
Only a pawn in the game.*

GEORGE SEAVER.

'CARRIGROHAN.'

BY MYRTLE JOHNSTON.

'Tis I.R.A. now. It was I.R.B. *then*, but what is there, sure, betwixt the A and the B?

I'm hearing of the police in Liverpool laying hands on more of them as would have blown up the lighting of England only for the clock stopping that was to time the explosion. Them new clocks—contrairy bits of things, they are. I mind an old clock up in the Castle when the family was in residence—and believe me or not, that clock was going sixty years without a stop. 'Twas 'grandfather' they called it. You could have exploded the Houses of Parliament by it, so you could.

Themselves and their clocks!

Only for them being in England they'd not have been caught. The English do open their mouths to the police. 'Tis not 'informing' they call it, but 'helping the police.' It was that they didn't take account of.

Now Tralee is not so far from us but a donkey would trot you there and back in the day—if he'd trot it for you—but don't be asking me what I know about the explosion threw at the hotel where they had the Prime Minister's young gentleman staying. I'm an old man—what age am I? Them above knows, for I don't—and I hear nothing now.

Bad luck to the morsel of harm I wished to the young gentleman—sure, we can't choose who we'll be born. All I'm thinking is of the parish priest in the days of the Land League—down in Kerry he was too—who was terrible agin the drinking in the place, and he give out from the pulpit,

'Boys,' says he, 'it's whiskey makes you shoot your landlords. And it's whiskey makes you miss them.'

I've heard of them as holds that to do the big things you'll need to be sober. Which is contrairy to our holding in Carrigrohan—and, for what I know, in other parts of the country—that for a big thing you'd need to be drunk and the bigger, the drunker for it.

You'll tell me times are changed, and they're changed indeed. But if it isn't the liquor these times, isn't it something queer and uncounted for, under God, that does make the Irish miss?

Gelignite they have now, is it? Greek Fire was what we had *then*. The year 1867 I'm talking of. That was before the Land League. It was the times of the I.R.B.—that was Irish Republican Brotherhood—and the times of the Fenians in America that were backing us up to fight.

I don't know what was the Greek Fire made of, only they made it in a place up in Dublin, keeping it in glass bottles. When the bottle was threw and broke, the stuff would go up in flames. Up in Dublin they'd be carrying the bottles in the pockets of them, and often enough, I heard tell, it would explode on them, when it'd be off with the coats in a twinkling, and run for their lives—and small blame to them. It was that way the police got hold of a power of secret papers in the pockets of the coats they'd find smoking and burning in the streets.

We never had a bottle of it down here in Carrigrohan. We were thirty-one in our Circle—all the young men in the place. There was efforts made to get us to join with the Circle at Knockamore that numbered two hundred, but we stood on our own at Carrigrohan.

The I.R.B. was all Circles with Centres at the heads of them. The Centres was what they called A's—they were

the colonels. Then there was the B's, like the captains, and the C's and the D's. The D's were the privates. I was a D. I was a lad turned fifteen in December '67, and I had the oath in secret from Barry Logue who was sergeant—the C—of our squad. Everything was done in secret, and yet it came out at the end that the Government in England knew everything that was done.

In the Army Intelligence Office, which was the carpentry shed belonging to Flory Linnane's shebeen, the recruits used to be sworn in and the secret meetings held. I swore the oath to fight for the Irish Republic—the words of it are clear on my tongue yet. It's seventy-two years ago and I was turned fifteen. I swore to be true to the oath or be a dead man. Seventy-two years . . .

That December—when will I forget it in Carrigrohan? Times are quiet now, I hear nothing. James Stephens was in New York, where he had them lepping mad to come over and be in the fight with us, and where all the money and the guns was to come from. (I hear since that a power of money did come from America, besides five thousand pound a week, at some time, from the Republicans in France, and as much from Russia, by reason of the Crimea—but I can't answer for the truth of that, for we never saw a penny of it at Carrigrohan.)

There's some say James Stephens was a thieving liar, and some say he was a great patriot. What I know is that when we heard in Carrigrohan how he was after telling them in America that at the end of December, Ireland would rise, I was drunk for the first time, being but a lad, the night of it, at Flory Linnane's, and it seemed the Republic was as good as fought and won already. So it might have been, only for the Government suspending the Haby Corpy (that does always mark trouble) and arresting Centres as fast as

net herrings. A lot of Americans were come over to command in the fighting, and they with the beautiful green uniforms that thick with gold lace, and gold harps on the belt buckles, it break your heart to hear of them thrown away to be found by the police in the mud of the fields or in the lanes. (Some Irish Centres had uniforms too, made from calico, but not at Carrigrohan.) But they didn't get all the Americans who were Centres. There was one, down at Ballygowlan, to the south of us. By all accounts he was a fighting fellow that made the people do great things agin English soldiers before the end. 'Tis said the names of that Circle are kept in Ballygowlan to this day as heroes' names. Oh, 'tis said a young American, a relation to one of them—Gorman was he called? I forget—was over a couple of years ago and had a memory monument put up on the spot in the mountains where they fell, with the names of them all marked on it to eternity, and the date—the 11th February, 1867.

It was the eleventh February was to be the date for the Rising after all, in place of December. Our A had it by a travelling tinker from the District Organiser, that had it from the Organiser of the County, that had it from the Vice-President for the Province, that had it from James Stephens himself in Ameriky.

We hadn't the like of the American at Ballygowlan for our Colonel. Flory Linnane owned the trade in Carrigrohan—'twas the cabin at the end of the street on the right where they're mending the thatch. Flory's great niece has it now, and there's the drink going still beyant the counter in the evenings.

Flory was a queer man. He wasn't one to talk a lot. You couldn't tell, for the life of you, what he'd be thinking.

In the evenings he'd get to talk about the old battles in

history. There was a story he had—'twas his favourite—I mind listening to him tell it, and it was like seeing it happen before your eyes. It was about Brian Boru's men at the Battle of Clontarf who were wounded, and didn't they make the sound ones tie them to stakes in the front rank, the way they could be standing to fight yet.

Flory read seven newspapers in a day. When the Militiaman that used to be coming over from barracks on the sly to drill us was arrested, Flory got a book called the 'Defence of Ireland'—it was printed special for the I.R.B.—and learnt the drill from it well enough to put us through it. He'd be for hours tracing his thumbnail over a map of the country in the back of the book. Then, 'It'll be a great fight,' he used to say.

The boys in the shebeen would be talking about Stephens, and the way he had the country mobilized. We thought Flory knew everything, because of him getting despatches from the District Organiser and writing them back to him.

Mikeen Regan—he was another sergeant, he was drowned thirty years ago in a squall while out trawling—Mikeen says to him, 'Flory, when will the fight be over and won?' says he.

Barry Logue, he that had great sense in him, asks him, 'Isn't it the truth, Flory, that after we win we're to take the estates from the landlords and share them amongst the peasants?'

That seemed worth fighting for to poor Barry. He didn't live to see it come, and isn't that as well, maybe?

Flory would say to us, 'It'll be a great fight.' That was all he said.

I was unloading fish by the jetty when the word was slipped me by Patsy Screena to be at the old place up the mountain at midnight, armed, on the tenth. Oh, them were the days! What is it to be a patriot these times with

the fighting done with? Is it the Civic Guards or the I.R.A.? You do never hear the word spoke now.

The old place was the ruins of the old castle of Duncorra where Flory Linnane did be drilling us. There the thirty-one of us was gathered on the tenth, midnight. I've heard it said that the I.R.B. had no firearms, but that's a lie in Carrigrohan. Flory had an old pistol, and there was three muskets among us, besides the few pikes distributed to us by the Organiser—us having no pike-maker in the place. The rest of us did with hatchets and rakes or spades, and there was them, like myself, with the oars of their boats.

It was very bright moonlight and a thundering cold night. I never saw such a pack of blue and white faces as were in the ruins on that occasion. My own, I'd swear was the bluest. I was afeared of Duncorra by moonlight. But it was more nor that fear only. I never in my life felt less keenness for a fight. It wasn't this way at all I'd thought it'd be. Everything was changed from the drilling nights when there'd be jollity and joking and all divilments. There wasn't a word spoke, only for Flory reading the roll, and the answers as low as if we feared to speak out. You'd have thought we were prisoners in a cell waiting sentence.

After posting sentries, Mikeen and Barry, being the sergeants, began, as quick as they could hand it, to put round the porter, which was on Flory, by reason of the morning seeing the start of our victorious struggle. We were too cold and too sober—that was the matter. We knew it, and we went hard at the drink until we began to be warmed, and then someone raised a song.

Patsy Screena upped and gave us a piece that was printed in the papers at the time of the Crimea War when it was thought England was beat. You know how it was said in

the old days—'England's wars is Ireland's Cause.' How could it be otherwise?

*'Well, well, some say her voice is gone,
Though loud and hoarse she tries to roar it.
They hint her tyrant race is run
And I'd be sorry to ignore it.
I think, as sets her blood-red sun
Our emerald star may glitter o'er it.
What do you think, Paddy Cooney,
Tim o'Farrell, Teddy Mooney?
I think, as sets her blood-red sun
Our emerald star may glitter o'er it.
Do you take my sense, Mulrooney?'*

We sang 'A Nation once again,' and the Shearers' Song—that's a song for you! And here's another we sang that night, the words come back to me:

*'For now the morn is breakin', me boys,
The pirate ship is lakin', me boys.
Our villainous foes—to the bottom they goes,
For their cursed ould impire is shakin', me boys.'*

(Och, I'm wrong to try singing. 'Twill bring a stroke on me.)

We was beginning to enjoy ourselves and raising such a hullabaloo—being out of earshot by miles—that when Flory stood up he'd trouble to get us quiet to listen to him. Man, Flory was stark sober. For that matter it was as well for him, seeing what way the drop always took him. It'd start him speaking out loud and solemn, whoever might be near him, 'Forget not the field——'

*'Forget not the field where they perished,
The truest, the last of the brave—'*

At 'Could the chain for an instant be riven' the drink would shake his voice with weeping like a babby, the way he never

could get past them words. When he was sober, divil the line of a poem he was ever known to spout.

Flory stood up in the moonlight agin a great slab of black rock like a piece of pillar. Says he in the slow, low, soft voice he had, 'Boys, as God sees me I'm not deceiving you. I've given thought to the matter of the fighting, and it appears to me that her empire is steadier nor what you're singing, and she's got a roar left in her yet. The odds agin us are more than is made known. We may not win.'

There was a shindy of howling at that, but Flory was not angered, so we were quiet again to hear what would he say next.

And he said, 'I'd be sorry if that makes any man of you afraid.'

I thought Mikeen Regan would have floored him for that, colonel or no colonel. Only Flory laughed out loud as a man might laugh after being saved out of danger and crazy with the blessed joy of it—and that stopped Mikeen with his fist lifted. Flory laughs that way, and he says, 'Boys, I'm glad you're not afeared. 'Twill be a great fight in Ireland of the few agin the many. Their pride is arms and armies, and ours is fighting without arms and dying in our blood without retreating.' Then Flory told us again the story of Brian Boru's wounded men and the stakes. And he says, 'If there's a man here who is not proud, not to fight and win, but to fight and die, for Ireland in an unequal and bloody battle that'll make history, let him take himself off out of this. 'Tis no place for him.'

No one moved. No one spoke either until it was Barry Logue that shouted. 'When do we attack?'

To that Flory said nothing.

Mikeen calls out to him. 'Haven't you the orders from headquarters for the Rising, Flory?'

Flory says, 'As God sees me, I'm straight with you, boys. I was promised on oath I'd get additional arms and the plans of campaign in time from our Organiser. But no word is come through from him.'

Patsy cries out, 'The cheating grabbers—have they forgot us entirely at Carrigrohan?'

Flory says, 'Let them forget us. Carrigrohan has not forgot. Unarmed and on our own we rise in Carrigrohan with the country this dawn, and march into the fight as the Fenians marched to their ruin on Gabhra plains rejoicing that the enemy outnumbered them.'

If Flory was not cold sober I'd have judged he'd a sup taken for what he did next—for all it sounded like a prayer at the altar, the way he said it, more than like a piece of a poem :

*'Oh remember life can be
No charm for him who lives not free.
Like the day-star in the wave
Sinks the hero to his grave
Midst the dew-fall of a nation's tears.'*

If I thought his voice shook at the end—he seemed choking—the words was covered with a spate of cheering that was like the flames of a bonfire up a dark sky. I was warmed right through me, and I wasn't afraid any more. I saw that none of us was afraid. There wasn't anything to fear. All we had to think of was the fighting—the bigger fight the better, just as Flory said.

I had my coat off and filled up with big stones when the order was given to fall in. It seemed to me the castle ruin, and the rocks about, and the moonlight itself, was holding their breath to watch us go past. I thought of the Fenians in old days marching to Gabhra, and I felt like one of them. Would there be songs made about ourselves too, I wondered.

We were quiet now, marching, but it was no more the quiet of dread on us. Poor Barry—he'd no thought then of the landlords' estates. If we'd come up that minute agin a regiment of the Militia, we'd not have made way for them. We'd have cheered. With Flory at the head of us, I tell you we'd have marched on the Vice-Regal Lodge and pulled down the Union Jack from the roof of it. But myself was for more nor that. I wanted to die beside Flory for Ireland. I've never got to feeling the same since. I was seeing myself fall, shot through by a score of bullets, and my body carried out like the Croppy Boy's in the song—

*'At Geneva Barracks that young man died
And at Passage they have his body laid——'*

(I mustn't try to sing. The voice is gone from me.)

I was the youngest of all of us that marched that night down from Duncorra and I'm the only one left living to tell the tale of it.

Where was we making for? There was no Military nearer to us than Tralee, and so Flory and some was for attacking the police barracks. The police had been augmented, and they'd a cannon in the yard could blow us to pieces, only we meant to get first hold of it. But when we was come down on the road across from where the cliff breaks, with the sea below it, Barry Logue points his musket towards the coastguard station, cursing it, and he cries out, 'There it is for you, lads—the wickedest monument of England's tyranny in the country, that hinders the smuggling. Would we not be rich men standing here?' Barry cries out, 'only for them blasted lights and the devils as burn them.'

And Barry's young brother in jail a week since for the sup of French brandy cotched on him that he was for taking up to the Castle after the night's fishing. The coastguards

was augmented too, and armed police put on after dark to be patrolling them.

Barry didn't wait on the word from Flory. He gave the yell to charge all at once, without so much as looking to see us in order, and was off running, with the musket held level; and, begor, we was all of us after him at the double over the sea-grass and heather.

Clouds were gaining on the moon, and a quarter mile from us along the cliff the coastguard lights were shining; then a small light began waving itself bang forinst us as we ran. Not one of us but knew it for a police lantern—hadn't we seen enough of them? A voice shouts to us to stop. Quick as draw cork, Flory fires at the light. The light waved about and fell, still lighting. We got up to it and saw, sure enough, it was a constable lying under a big rock, hit somewhere in the body. He was moving, trying to struggle himself up on his elbow and get the whistle at his mouth. And Mikeen swings up the second musket and fetched him at the base of the skull, and he fell back.

'That settled him,' says Mikeen. 'Twas a brain blow.'

'Tis the blow to kill a man the same as a cod. Mikeen knew.

We'd have set ourselves to the coastguard lights again, only we heard Flory cry out. The voice wasn't like his. The sound in it I've heard times since—God defend us!—when them on the shore will be watching a wreck, and a wave will break over it and lift the wreck, and them in her, from the rock. The crying out for that sight is the sound in Flory's voice as it comes back to me.

'He's not dead, boys!'

The moon was gone in. It was black dark, only for the wee lantern on the ground. There was a mist coming up off the sea and falling in drops on us. And there he lay

under the rock in the middle of us, the blood wetting the tunic over his ribs, and he stirred himself like an eel when it'll be all but dead, and moaned continual with the pain.

It was terrible, the sight he was. I felt like roaring outright and getting myself away quick to where that moaning of his wouldn't follow me. But I couldn't take my eyes from him, and none of us moved, for looking at him. His two eyes was rolled up, but all at once they blinked quick and opened at us. It was as if the poor fellow saw the pikes round him and the pistol smoking yet in Flory's hand, and thought it was up with him. He seemed to try and say something—some thought it was an *Ave*—and then he went off again, moaning ceased, and not a flick more out of him.

Who moved quick was Flory dropping the pistol and getting to his knees by the side of him.

Flory says, 'He's bleeding. He's not gone yet. Help me raise him, one of yez. We can't leave him die here by his lone,' Flory says.

'God put that from us,' says Mikeen Regan. He threw down the musket and he and Flory lifted the constable. Them two was the strongest of us. The rest of us came after them, back over the heath, and the way along up a pad road in the mountains to where there was a cabin. It was where Patsy's mother lived—she that was called the Widow Screena.

There was a light in the window. A rush-dip wouldn't be lasting that time. It was an altar candle burning before Saint Agnes on the dresser. That long the widow was praying, she was fallen asleep on her knees forenint the bed in the new white flour sack she had on her to sleep in.

She made up to her feet, catching her heart, hearing us at the door and window. She thought it was the police.

When the two stepped in carrying him, she thought they were bringing in Patsy.

She was a good woman—them above be as good to her ! When she seen who it was, she had the childer out of the bed and the constable lying in it. He looked a dead man. One of the childer started bawling at what she saw of him.

‘I’d be better to go for the priest,’ says Patsy, whispering it.

Flory was cutting the fellow’s coat off him with his ‘bacca knife and staunching the blood with the bed quilt. He sent Patsy for the priest, and a dozen more to scour the country for where old Doctor Mahaffey might be that night. He’d to keep staunching, showing the fellow was alive still. It was one of the new constables—I didn’t know his name.

‘He bought a half-dozen herrings off me yesterday,’ says Mikeen, staring down at him.

There was Mikeen, Flory and myself only of us in the cabin. The others were in the woody hollow not far off, waiting till Flory would come out to them. As time went on, one or another of them would creep up to the window outside to look in at the bed and go away quiet as a shadow.

There was once when we thought he was going. The widow was praying, ‘Heart of Jesus, reduced to agony, pity the dying.’

She asked would we sing the *Misere* with her for him.

When the singing ended, the constable stirred again.

‘He’s breathing yet,’ said Flory.

‘God save him—is he making to speak?’ said Mikeen.

If he was we couldn’t tell a word of it.

Flory bent low and spoke to him. ‘You need not be afeared, poor fellow. You’ll not be hurt more. We’re after sending for the priest and the doctor to you.’

The widow was folding the torn coat of him and putting

by the things fallen from the pockets. There was a letter in an old envelope with a Saint Antony seal on it.

'Would the poor creature have a sweetheart?' the widow she says.

She had put sods on the fire and given me milk to drink. The childer were asleep on the floor, their two heads on my knees. In the quiet, with only the rattle of her beads and the queer low sounds from the bed, as an hour passed, I felt a great drowsiness on me, until I went asleep at last.

I was woke up by Flory shaking my shoulder. I was mazed. I called out to him, 'Is it the fighting?' I looked about for my oar.

He says, 'The priest and the doctor will be here. You've to go.'

I saw the widow sleeping on her stool in the ashes. Mikeen was gone.

Flory says, 'I've to stay for them. If they'll be wanting the truth of what happened, it's myself should give it to them.'

The room was still as stone, and the bed quiet too. A grey streak of morning showed through the window.

'Where's them outside?' I said to Flory.

He says, 'They had no leader.'

You could never tell what he was thinking. His face was greyed with his weariness, and his eyes hollow and blinking. He was the queer man.

It was cold in the dawn going home. I went by the woody hollow. It was empty. The people was waiting there to the first of morning in the damp and dark, hearing the widow's praying, and then the thin sound of the *Misere* for the dead, so they thought. There was nothing heartened them to move, and so they went back then to their homes.

Flory was going home too, not long after us. I couldn't

tell you what passed between himself and the doctor and Father Mulholland. But this I tell you—there was no action took later on by the police agin anyone for what was done.

In the Intelligence Office Flory found intimation from the Organiser that the Rising was put off till March.

That was the end of the trouble in Carrigrohan. (After all there was no Rising in March either—I forget the reason.)

The constable got well. Wasn't he mighty tough ! and he had need to be.

Flory was dead twelve—or was it more ?—years after that in his sleep, of heart trouble the doctor gave it out. True enough he used to seem downhearted in himself since that night. But you could never tell what he would be thinking.

If we'd had a leader like the American at Ballygowlan—or if Flory had been drunk—we might be heroes ourselves at this day. Only I'd not be living now to talk of it. But what's the odds ? A couple more years and I'll be out to grass just the same, and there's none will trouble themselves to raise a memory monument over me.

BY THE WAY.

WE live to-day, in this country at least, in topsy-turvy land, which is called the realm of democracy. As far as is made known, all manner of careful and skilful preparation has been made for emptying London, in the event of what we euphemistically term 'an emergency,' of many thousands of mothers and children ; but is it not a fact that these are, with few exceptions, the mothers and children of those whom an earlier age called 'the lower classes' and that the members of the other classes can fend for themselves ? At all events, and apart from mothers and children, most ladies suffering under the disadvantage of being 'gently born' who happen also to be car-less have received neither guidance nor hope of assistance.

★ ★ ★

In general too, an astonishing race the English. There are people who offered themselves for national service in the autumn and are only now receiving their enrolment forms, and the way of the workmen on the trenches in the London Parks is so leisurely that it must be seen to be believed. And yet—very strangely but very certainly—history has shown over and over again that other nations that have banked upon our casualness have bitterly rued their error afterwards. We are not in fact quite the idiots we outwardly declare ourselves to be.

★ ★ ★

Parliament, we know, has the last word of authority and could, if it so chose, declare a man to be deemed a woman, but it is a little startling, and to lovers of English beauty,

disquieting, to find that now, under the Camps Bill just enacted, land given to or bought by the National Trust for the explicit purpose of being held for the national use for ever in undisturbed quietude and undiminished historical interest may be taken as a site for a camp. However desirable camps may be, the use of National Trust land for such a purpose is clearly a breach, Parliamentarily imposed, of national trust—and 'emergency' in its 1939 sense was at no time pleaded.

* * *

'I was near here,' writes a very old friend of mine from King Cove, Alaska, 'across on the Behring Sea Coast 32 years ago and it has not changed much. It is still the land that God forgot, snow, wind, rain and cold, no trees at all—not a tree within 200 miles. The fog is so thick they cut it into blocks and build houses of it! In short, the climate is like London in winter.'

A happy piece of libel which puts me in mind of another, written many a year ago by the same racy pen: he declared that he had come across the following notice posted up in the American desert, '400 miles from Daggert, 150 miles from Coyote holes, 40 miles from wood, 40 miles from water, 40 feet from Hell: God bless our home!'

* * *

One of the more difficult questions addressed to me by Youth:—'Daddy, would you say that Bonnie Prince Charlie was a braver man than Richard Cœur de Lion? After all, Richard never said anything when they pulled the arrow out and tore his archery [sic] and killed him.'

* * *

Europe has seen many a singular rise from obscurity to eminence in this present generation : on most of the ancient thrones now sit men of humble origins, and, whilst their several achievements may indeed call for admiration, the resultant dictators are not, in our eyes, so admirable. And yet there is one country where a man who began as an ordinary naval officer of a good but not great family has been called to rule as Regent though the country has no king and legally now cannot have one, and at the same time has succeeded in retaining for twenty years the esteem even of those of other countries who are free to criticize ; that country is Hungary and the Regent is Nicholas Horthy. Till now there has been no English biography : in *Regent of Hungary* (Rich & Cowan, 18s. n.) Owen Rutter supplies the deficiency. Mr. Rutter is not only a practised writer, he is also London Editor of the *Hungarian Quarterly* ; no one better qualified to write the authorised biography could have been found and he has done his task of delicacy with as much authority as skill.

* * *

It is not long since Alistair and Henrietta Tayler published that important, distinguished, and vivid piece of history *The Stuart Papers at Windsor* (Murray, 12s. 6d. n.) : now the two eminent authorities have published what regrettably is their last piece of collaboration owing to the recent death of Mr. Alistair Tayler, namely *John Graham of Claverhouse* (Duckworth, 12s. 6d. n.). This not only bears all the signs of painstaking and erudite scholarship associated in all Jacobite circles with the names of the two biographers, but is a spirited and valuable defence of a much-maligned man. It will be read with interest and appreciation by all followers of the Stuart fortunes.

* * *

It may be doubted whether any more complete example of the vagaries and vanities of fame can be found anywhere on earth than in the life and work of John Keats. As all the world knows, he died in his early twenties, impoverished and unrecognised, an exile in Rome: as all the world knows, yes, everyone now knows that and the main outline of his hopeless love for Fanny Brawne, and vast numbers know much also about his friends and his feelings. But how many know more about his work than the several poems they learnt, unwillingly, at school? And has one in a hundred thousand even of those who remembered these really read *Endymion* right through? At all events, for all who care not merely for the facts of Keats's life as a story but for the works for which he existed as poetry, here at length is the final book. Adding his own thoughtful and assiduous scholarship to the labours of his predecessors and the discoveries of recent times, Professor H. W. Garrod now gives the English-reading world—that section of it which cares for such things—*The Poetical Works of John Keats* (Oxford University Press, 30s. n.), a definitive collection which prints every poem Keats wrote, good and bad, grave and gay, with as full an *apparatus criticus* as any student can desire. One tiny mistake I chanced to notice: the two sonnets discovered in 1914 and printed on pp. 527–8 were not first published in *The Times Literary Supplement*, as is stated, but in *The Times* itself; I happen to know, as their appearance is a little piece of literary history personal to myself.

* * *

To Lord Byron. Such is the simple title of yet another book about this strange, this astonishing man about whose life, work and loves so much has been written, sometimes with authority and sometimes without. This volume, begun by 'George Paston' and finished after her lamented death

by Peter Quennell (Murray, 12s. 6d. n.), is certainly in the former category, and it is difficult to see what successors it can have. It is based upon the great collection of unpublished letters sent to Byron by his lady admirers—it bears as its secondary title 'Feminine Profiles'—now in safe keeping at 50 Albemarle Street. It will have a special interest for readers of CORNHILL, carrying on and completing those distinguished studies by Miss G. M. Symonds ('George Paston') which were begun by her in her series 'New Light on Byron's Loves' in these pages in 1934. Twelve loving ladies contribute: they include Lady Caroline Lamb, Harriette Wilson and Claire Clairmont—and the reader is assured of interest, drama, passion and intrigue most skilfully handled by the two editors and beautifully produced with twelve fine illustrations in collotype. An indispensable adjunct to Byroniana.

* * *

It is always pleasant, even though it is far from unusual, to welcome books from those whose names are known as contributors to CORNHILL—and this month two more lie upon my shelves. Derek Hudson has already in these pages shown his aptitude for biography: he now gives it full rein in the life of Winthrop Mackworth Praed, to which he has given the rather fanciful and even perhaps slightly misleading title of *A Poet in Parliament* (Murray, 12s. 6d. n.). A poet Praed undeniably was, of a graceful, light (and also a precocious) kind: in Parliament he also certainly was for a portion of his all too short life; and he wrote many verses whilst an M.P. But nevertheless the two activities of verse-writing and politics went no better together in his case than in that of others—they are essentially inimical; and it is possibly in this that Praed's limitations of stature lay. Everyone expected him to go to the top of the tree—that he never

did in either activity. As a politician he is now forgotten and though in 1864 a prominent reviewer called him 'the Watteau of English poetry' it is doubtful if his great talent for versification and social touch will gain for him any lasting remembrance. And yet he was a loved and lovable figure, and with a grace akin to his subject's own technique Mr. Hudson has revived him for a generation of readers whose life and standards are so different to his.

* * *

The other by a writer whose work both in prose and verse is not unknown to CORNHILL is Julian Tennyson's *Suffolk Scene* (Blackie, 8s. 6d. n.). Mr. Tennyson, as is recognised, loves the English landscape both as a poet and as a sportsman—a combination by no means as infrequent as it may seem—and Suffolk he loves, well, one may almost say, 'the other side of idolatry.' And it is interesting to note what strikes one observer of scenes intimately familiar to another's own boyhood. It chanced that mine was spent in the Stour valley in the heart of 'Constable's country'—to Mr. Tennyson this is 'country which has been immortalised as no other has ever been' and he dwells also upon the beauties of the Suffolk punches. But he does not mention the incongruity—as it seemed always to us—of Constable's white horses, nor does he dwell upon the towers of the churches—never a spire anywhere. But this is not to be critical only autobiographical: what means most to one set of lovers does not necessarily impress another. When all minor comments are made this remains a volume written by a sensitive and discerning lover of Suffolk for other lovers and as such is sure of its welcome.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 189.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 31st July.

'As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To ——— round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before thee;'

1. 'Thus with many a pretty oath,
—— and nay, and faith and troth,'
2. 'That —— the green corn-field did pass
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,'
3. 'Dear love, for —— less than thee,
Would I have broke this happy dream;'
4. 'So shuts the marigold her leaves
At the —— of the sun;'
5. 'From golden slumber on a bed
Of heapt —— flowers,'
6. 'Then and only then she wears
Her —— pearls —— I mean thy tears.'

Answer to Acrostic 187, May number: 'Trust thou thy Love: if she be proud, is she not sweet?' (Ruskin: 'Trust thou thy love'). 1. PaleS (Browning: 'The Wanderers'). 2. RoW (Coleridge: 'The Ancient Mariner'). 3. OnE (Fitzgerald: 'Omar Khayyám'). 4. UnlikE (Elizabeth Browning: 'Sonnet from the Portuguese'). 5. DusT (Thomas Jordan: 'A hundred years hence').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss E. Carleton Williams, Broomgrove, Goring-on-Thames, and Miss Edith F. Coles, 48 Brayburne Avenue, Clapham, S.W.4, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—Sources need not be given.

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